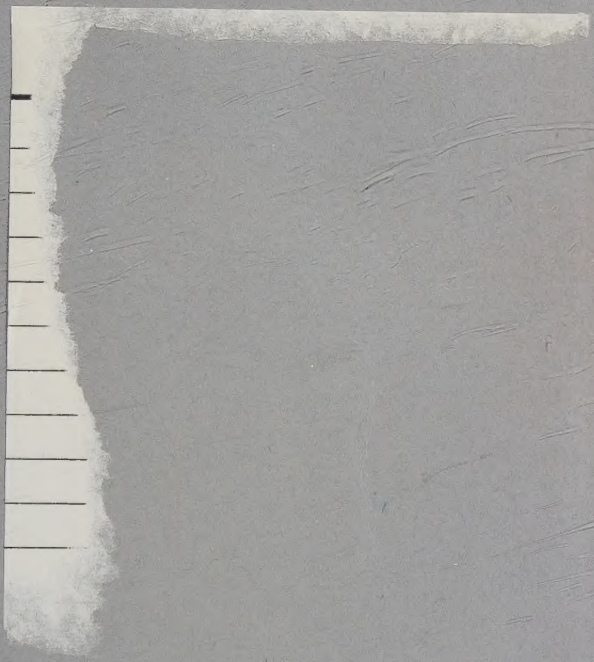
24312

CB
361
F4

AUGSBURG COLLEGE & SEMINARY
George Sverdrup Library
MINNEAPOLIS 4, MINNESOTA

WITHDRAWN



THE RENAISSANCE

Digitized by the Internet Archive
in 2025

https://archive.org/details/bwb_C0-BCW-912

WITHDRAWN

AN

INTRODUCTION TO THE STUDY

OF THE

RENAISSANCE

BY

LILIAN F. FIELD

NEW YORK
CHARLES SCRIBNER'S SONS
1898

COPYRIGHT, 1898, BY
CHARLES SCRIBNER'S SONS

TROW DIRECTORY
PRINTING AND BOOKBINDING COMPANY
NEW YORK

CB
361
F4

PREFACE

THE word 'Introduction' has been used, owing to the modesty of certain scholarly writers, in a somewhat misleading sense. In the present case it is intended to be taken quite literally. My object in this small volume is merely to put before the student a general outline of the whole complex movement under consideration, in order that he may the better proceed to examine it in detail in works which deal exhaustively with the various divisions of the subject. The book therefore makes little claim to originality, and can boast of no research. It aims at giving trustworthy information as to the facts, and some deductions drawn from them, as they are to be found in the best authorities. It is not intended for scholars, who would find little in it that is not trite, while they would miss many points that might have seemed to call for mention. To touch in a book of this size upon all the men who helped to make this period memorable would be to weary the student with lists of names, many of which might be unfamiliar to him. I have thought it best to dwell at what length I might on some of the more important.

If I have seemed too ready to reap where I have not sown; if I have gathered from the fields of others to

24312

enrich my own sheaf—I can only plead in excuse that it is my desire to entice the student to glean from the same fields a more abundant harvest for himself. It would make too long a list to enumerate all the authorities that have necessarily been consulted for a general survey of this kind. In the sections which deal with Italian culture I have been almost entirely guided by the late Mr. J. A. Symonds' monumental work, 'The Renaissance in Italy,' and others of his writings; and I must also express my obligations to the works of Mr. Pater; M. Taine; Michelet ('Histoire de France' and 'Life of Luther'); Milman ('History of Latin Christianity'); Vernon Lee ('Euphorion'); Mr. Beard ('The Reformation in Relation to Modern Thought'); Mrs. Mark Pattison ('The Renaissance of Art in France'); Mr. Lecky ('Rationalism in Europe,' etc.); Mr. Ruskin (various works); Mr. Bryce ('The Holy Roman Empire'); Mrs. Oliphant ('Cervantes,' etc.); Professor Saintsbury ('History of French Literature'; 'Elizabethan Literature'); Mr. Wakeman ('History of the English Church'); Mr. T. R. Smith (Architecture: Renaissance and Modern); Ticknor ('History of Spanish Literature'), as well as Hallam, Froude, Green, Motley, Hazlitt, Ranke, Sismondi, Freeman, and many others whose names will readily suggest themselves as authorities.

L. F. F.

November, 1898.

CONTENTS

CHAPTER		PAGE
I.	THE MIDDLE AGES	1
II.	THE REACTION	22
III.	THE REVIVAL OF LEARNING	38
IV.	THE RENAISSANCE IN LITERATURE	
	Section 1. *In Italy*	68
	Section 2. *In France*	85
	Section 3. *In England*	100
	Section 4. *In Spain*	125
	Section 5. *In Germany*	140
V.	THE RISE OF THE DRAMA	141
VI.	THE RENAISSANCE IN ARCHITECTURE	178
VII.	THE RENAISSANCE IN SCULPTURE	195
VIII.	THE RENAISSANCE IN PAINTING	
	Section 1. *In Italy*	215
	Section 2. *In Spain*	239
	Section 3. *In France*	245
	Section 4. *In Flanders*	250
	Section 5. *In Holland*	256
	Section 6. *In Germany*	258
IX.	THE RENAISSANCE AND RELIGIOUS THOUGHT	267

AUGSBURG COLLEGE AND SEMINARY
LIBRARY - MINNEAPOLIS 4, MINN.

AN INTRODUCTION

TO THE

STUDY OF THE RENAISSANCE

CHAPTER I

THE MIDDLE AGES

The progress of the world is, it has been said, a progress by reaction. It has never been a steady advance towards higher and higher development, but, rather, a somewhat jerky progression—marked now by long intervals of apparent torpor, now by ebullitions of feverish activity. There have been times when men have grown weary of the existing conditions of life, and have risen in revolt against them; either, in the result, falling a step in the scale of civilisation, or else initiating a new era of progress. And the transition from the mediæval to the modern world—more or less aptly designated the Renaissance—was essentially a movement of reaction. We shall therefore appreciate its character the better if we first recall the conditions which had become irksome enough to bring about so widespread a revolt.

The history of Europe during the four or five centuries succeeding the fall of the Roman Empire is a dark and complex record. The five great nations were evolving themselves out of the chaotic materials afforded, on the one hand, by the wrecks of the old civilisations, and on the other by the young barbarian hordes of the North, ever reinforced by the influx of wandering tribes from Asia. Italians, Celts, Goths, Huns and Northmen were all clashing together in a blind struggle for existence. This was the birth-time of modern Christian Europe, a birth-time attended by many throes of agony, of internecine strife, of tyranny and bloodshed. It was necessary that languages should be formed, boundaries fixed, methods of government tried, Christianity developed, before any kind of order or coherence could arise out of so many conflicting elements. A chief cause of the unsettled condition of Europe was that mysterious wandering of nations southwards and westwards, which is called the Northern Migrations; a constant tendency of the German tribes to push southwards, which had shown itself even before the time of Cæsar, and which was much accelerated during the fourth century by the appearance in the east of Europe of wild hordes of Asiatic savages, who hovered threateningly on the boundaries of civilisation, and then poured in, and swept in numbers that defied resistance, over Eastern and Central Europe, settling, for the most part, in Germany.

The condition of Europe after the fall of the Roman Empire

It was not until the eleventh century, when the Northmen had established themselves in England and in the South of Italy, that the last reverberations of the great

'people's-wandering' died away. The darkest times for modern Europe were now over. Italy, France, Germany, England and Spain had attained to some degree of coherence and individuality. By the energy and striving of those early centuries, when Europe was, as it were, a melting-pot of chaotic races, the social and political institutions which constitute the 'machinery' of the Middle Ages, as we know them between the eleventh and the fifteenth century, had been developed and organised. A brief glance at the history of these institutions will show how each, having served its own good purpose for a time, was slowly but inevitably working out its own destruction; so that by the close of the fourteenth century all things pointed to revolution and change.

and from the eleventh to the fifteenth century

First, and most important, is the Ecclesiastical system, the greatest and most potent of all the magnificent ideals by which the Middle Ages were inspired. At this time (the eleventh century) the spiritual influence of the Church was at its highest. All historians, of whatever school, are agreed that the benefit of this influence over the young, half-formed nations was of inestimable value. Without forcing her opinions on the pagan and barbarian races among whom she had penetrated, she had insensibly won their respect by her practical setting forth of principles of justice, charity, and universal brotherhood, and had so impressed them with her solemn and venerable rites that they had submitted themselves to her guidance, and had allowed her to mediate between the conquerors and the conquered. She had held up

The mediæval Church

before the eyes of quarrelsome races the great idea of a world-wide unity, and had succeeded in drawing them together under a common head in the bonds of a common faith. Slavery disappeared before her as she taught and practised the truth of human equality before God. By the example of her monks—toiling in field and workshop—she redeemed manual labour from the contempt in which it was held, not only by the ancients, but by those later nations whose freemen all bore arms. While ever discouraging individual rebellion against authority, she was always ready to oppose the tyranny of despotic sovereigns; to send out an Anselm, a Becket, a Langton, who should testify that there is a law above a tyrant's will, and help the voiceless people to obtain their charters of liberty. The monasteries were oases of refinement and love in a howling wilderness of ignorance and brutality. In them the wanderer might find rest, the sick might be nursed, the ignorant taught, the hungry fed, and the naked clothed. The teaching of the monks and the stateliness of the ritual kept the idea of high and heavenly things before the minds of men who lived in a rude, barbarous, and unthinking age. The religious life set forth an example of the sternest, most heroic self-denial, of whole-hearted devotion and resolute endurance, among people given up to the grossest animalism. The Popes had not yet made any aggressive demands for temporal or even spiritual power. Heretics were few, and little regarded, for there was no predisposition among the people to listen to heresies: the Catholic faith sufficed for all their needs. It was no mere department of their lives, but it dominated their whole existence, from the first breath

to the last, and was the basis of all their political, social, and municipal relations.

To us who look back it is evident that the eleventh century was the time of the Church's truest greatness; but this was by no means apparent at the time, for all through the twelfth and thirteenth centuries she was steadily growing in wealth and importance, until the most powerful of secular monarchs had to give way beneath her ban. And yet all this time her hold upon the hearts of the people was being gradually, insidiously loosened. If we ask, in wonder, how it was that, in spite of her splendid organisation, her ancient prestige, her widespread influence, and her noble record of great achievement, the mediæval Church had, by the end of the fourteenth century, lost so much of her inspiring power, we find the answer in two important facts.

In the first place, as we shall see more plainly presently, she would not adapt herself to the changing conditions of changing times, would not sympathise with her growing children when they reached the inevitable age of wonder, inquiry, and doubt. Entrenching herself in an iron conservatism, she replied to their anxious questionings with threats and blows, and so initiated that terrible record of persecution by fire and sword which darkens the history of the fourteenth, fifteenth, and sixteenth centuries—those horrors of which the massacre of the Albigenses, and the establishment of the Inquisition by Innocent III. at the beginning of the thirteenth century, are the first landmarks.

In the second place, the downfall of the mediæval Church was hastened by the generosity of her benefactors,

who heaped wealth and honour upon her until she sank beneath their weight. Most of the great failures of the Middle Ages were caused by the fact that the framers of its lofty ideals omitted to take into account the weakness of human nature. Thus Hildebrand, in his splendid theory of the Pope as supreme ruler, serene dispenser of equity to the sovereigns of the world, did not foresee that, in order to maintain this supremacy, the Pope would have to vie with ambitious monarchs, to fight as an Italian prince among other Italian princes, and so lose the dignity that clung about him as spiritual head; did not remember that, in natures inferior to his own, wealth and power beget the greed—nay, almost the necessity—for more wealth and power; did not see that, at the least, so great a temporal responsibility would bring about the result that the head of the Church and her other great dignitaries would be chosen for their qualities as statesmen and diplomatists rather than as divines. Just in the same way, as the wealth of the monasteries increased, their heads necessarily became men of business, able to manage the affairs of large estates, and to deal with important matters of finance; so that, step by step, the spiritual ideal was lowered and became merged in worldliness; increased wealth brought about a more luxurious style of living, and the severity of discipline was relaxed. Thus the way was prepared for that looseness, that depravity of morals, which, in its dark contrast to a noble and revered ideal, smote with such painful sharpness on the minds of thinking men; while the effect produced on the mass of the people, when they saw those whom they had been taught to respect and whom they believed to have unlimited power over their

souls, sunk in infamous crimes, was a mixture of abject superstition with an entire disregard for morality.

The beginning of the fourteenth century saw the fall of the Papacy, when, transferred to Avignon, it grovelled at the feet of the French king. The Captivity was followed by forty years of Schism, when rival Popes disputed for the tiara; and if anything further was needed to complete the painful disillusionment, it was added when the necessity for money induced the Popes to sanction the deplorable trade in indulgences, pardons and dispensations; and when the clergy, not content with opening shops, in which, owing to their immunity from taxation, they could undersell the merchants, began to extort money right and left by that unholy spiritual traffic.

The Holy Roman Empire

The Holy Roman Empire was another of these great ideas by which, so much more than by hard facts, the Middle Ages were guided. The mediæval mind could no more conceive of a political system without the Emperor at its head than of a religious system without the Pope at its head. Emperor and Pope were alike the Vicars of God, appointed to rule over all Christendom. Of the Emperors it was only Charlemagne, the first and greatest, who even approximately realised this great pretension; but from his time down to the fourteenth century the turbid course of European politics was dominated and directed by the Imperial idea. This influence proved indeed disastrous; for from the time of the Emperor Otho an indissoluble connection was established between the throne of Germany and the Empire, so that to be elected King of Germany gave the right to be crowned as Emperor. Italy, dividing her allegiance

between 'an unarmed Pontiff and an absent Emperor,' lost all hope of becoming an united and patriotic nation; while the German Kingdom, which, under the early Emperors, was at the height of power and prosperity, gradually 'broke down beneath the weight of the Roman Empire.' The elective system fostered self-seeking and family aggrandisement in the Emperors, who at the same time, by merging their kingship in the Empire, lost control over their dominions, and gave up practical sovereignty for a nominal supremacy over a wider realm than they were able to govern. Meanwhile, as the temporal power and ambition of the Papacy increased, the two potentates, instead of supporting and strengthening one another, according to the original intention, became bitterly antagonistic; indeed, the relations between them led at last to the somewhat perplexing situation in which the Pope excommunicates the Emperor, while the Emperor at the same time deposes the Pope. A long and bitter struggle between the two powers ensued, which, beginning with the War of Investitures, became merged in the terrible protracted feud between Guelfs and Ghibellines, and lasted far on into the fifteenth century.

The supreme Emperor formed but the fitting coping-stone to the Feudal System, which step by step led up to such a head. By the eleventh century this system (first fully developed by Charlemagne) was adopted in almost every country in Europe, with the fortunate exception of Italy. Beneficent in its origin, it became one of the greatest of the stumbling-blocks that hindered the progress of civilisation. Regarding it from below, we see how the people of the Germans—

The Feudal System

though in early days the freest of all the European nations—were pressed upon by Northmen from without and harassed by nobles and great officials within until they gradually gave up all their political, and most of their personal, rights in return for the patronage and protection of those who were more powerful; we see the little hovels crouching round the base of the frowning castle, and we see the formation of a miserable Serf class, creatures who were considered as the absolute chattels of their master, robbed of the most elementary rights of humanity, degraded, despised, and beaten down, until there was little more soul left in them than in the clods of the earth they ploughed. We see, too, that in the great bare halls of the castle itself, where so many heterogeneous individuals were herded together, there was no possibility of home life or of domestic comfort. Eating, drinking, fighting, debauchery and the chase make up the routine of day after day, until, perhaps, the poor dumb people find a sudden strength, and, weary of the arrogance and ferocity of their oppressors, turn and rend them, as they did in the peasant wars in France and Germany. Regarding the Feudal System from above, we see a victorious king granting portions of his widening territory to his most distinguished knights in return for allegiance and the promise of military service, and these in turn sub-letting portions of their fiefs on corresponding terms; so that the whole kingdom was to be gathered in a subtle network, which could be drawn together at a word from the Throne. And then we find that the great nobles have become equal in power to their sovereign, that he is unable to compel their obedience, and has to resort to all kinds of shifts to maintain his power—

to buy the favour of the clergy and to improve the position of the townspeople, who were always ready to take part against the nobles; and that even then he is constantly obliged to give way. We find, too, sometimes, that the nobles, instead of uniting against the king, turn against one another, and set the whole country ablaze with civil war while they hunt down and destroy each other, as in the Wars of the Roses in England.

Chivalry

It was from the Feudal System, however, that there sprang the one gleam of softer light which throws over the Middle Ages the glamour of romance. Chivalry, with its high enthusiasm and its wonderfully noble ideal of perfect manhood, is another of the great thoughts of the Middle Ages. It was French in its origin, but it soon flourished in almost every Court in Europe. It was the result of a mingling of the French romantic and devotional spirit with the Norman love of adventure; both these uniting to produce the ideal character, the knight *sans peur et sans reproche*. Chivalry was not developed until the eleventh century, but with it there always existed a kind of pathetic groping backward, a consciousness of present failure, and a belief that what was, indeed, only a beautiful idea, must once have had a real existence. Hence it was that the legends of the knights of Arthur and of Charlemagne exercised so strong a fascination. In them could be found true knighthood and gallant adventures, whereas in real life it too often appeared that the love of warlike deeds had become a mere propensity to violence and brutality, that jousts and tourneys were but scenes of lawless riot, where old scores might easily be settled by a deft stroke in the mêlée;

that the reverential love of womanhood had degenerated into empty gallantry, mere admiration of beauty, and was leading to the profligacy which so disgraced the later Middle Ages. Instead of winning his lady by heroic deeds, the Provençal knight disputed for her in fantastic *tensons* in the Courts of Love; or, like the love-penitent of Languedoc, proved the ardour of his passion by dressing in gauze in winter and wearing heavy furs in summer; or would hire some shepherd to hunt him over the hills as a wolf, that he might fall at last wounded and abject at his lady's door. And it is as well to remind ourselves occasionally that the lady whose sleeve the amorous knight wore as his favour, and to whom his plaintive love-songs were addressed, was almost invariably, owing to the constitution of society, already the wife of some one else.

The Crusades

That which was heroic in the spirit of the Middle Ages found a more effective, because more practical, expression in the Crusades. Although of the thousands who embarked upon that great enterprise there were doubtless many for whom the only object was fame, or profit, or plunder; many who only sought such privileges as were accorded by Papal or Imperial decree to those who received the Red Cross; many who were willing to atone for a life of sin by the excitement of a martyr's death—yet it was in the main a high and unselfish impulse which led the noblest knights in Europe to fling away their lives in countless numbers upon the Holy Quest. The history of the Crusades is one of bright hopes and brief successes, followed by bitter disappointments and failures; of a fitful zeal; nay, often of a wanton perversion of holy things, when Popes proclaimed Crusades against

their fellow Christians, or against their personal enemies. The Crusades failed for want of unity; there was no true unity of plan or purpose in the rushing together of incongruous hosts of men driven by one great idea which dominated their imaginations; but the mingling of so many strange and discordant elements exercised a most beneficial effect upon civilisation. Chivalry attained its highest development when the military orders of St. John and the Templars were founded. Philosophy and theology were influenced, both for good and evil; for good by the broadening and liberalising of ideas which could not but result from an acquaintance with modes of thought so new and diverse; for evil by the spirit of mysticism which was derived from the East, and which took great hold of men's imaginations during the later Middle Ages; the Templars, especially, being famed for their dealings with things occult and supernatural. But the chief influence was upon the everyday lives of men. The majority of the Crusaders came from the North of Europe. To their semi-barbarous minds the civilisation of Italy and the luxury and wealth of the East were indeed a revelation, exciting them to emulation, encouraging them to higher efforts in manufacture and in art, and inspiring their imaginations with subject-matter for songs and stories. The spirit of enterprise which had slumbered so long was awakened at last, and a new activity showed itself both in industry and in the search for knowledge. An immense lift was given to the commercial class, both in wealth and social position, when kings and nobles, in order to equip their expeditions, were obliged to become the debtors of the merchants, and to grant charters to cities in return for

subsidies. Then began to arise those great families of merchant princes who, like the Medici of Florence and the Fuggers of Augsburg, were to become the most enthusiastic promoters and enlightened patrons of the new art and learning. As the traders jostled one another in foreign towns the old unreasoning national animosities began to die away. First consuls and then ambassadors were called into existence by commercial relations, and so the foundation was laid of modern diplomacy.

When we would estimate the Middle Ages from the point of view of the Renaissance, we must bear in mind that the fundamental difference between mediæval and modern modes of thought lies in the conception of the individual man. As soon as we find the individual asserting his right to think for himself, to act for himself, to possess for himself, then we may say that the Renaissance has begun. Both the Feudal System and the mediæval Church tended strongly to the repression of individuality. A man dared not differ in his political opinions from, or offend by his actions, the feudal lord upon whose protection his very life depended. In questions of peace and war he was not called upon to think for himself, still less to act for himself; he merely formed one of the weapons in the armoury of his suzerain. Nor, again, was there any need for a man to disturb his mind with spiritual anxieties, to speculate upon the eternal fate of his soul, upon abstract questions of right and wrong—all this was done for him by the theologians; and the answers to such questions were laid down by a stern, dogmatic authority, from which there could be no possible appeal. In truth, if a man felt within him the strivings of a 'divine dis-

The repression of individuality

content,' if he dreamed of higher, nobler, and more rational possibilities, it was better for him to keep his thoughts to himself, lest he should be drowned as a wizard, burnt as a heretic, or executed as a traitor. The result was that the doubts of clever men were smothered under a cloak of hypocritical orthodoxy, while the simple and credulous sank into a condition of apathetic, slothful ignorance.

To-day the cry of the thinker is for Truth—Truth at all hazards—even if it demand the rooting out from our hearts of beliefs the most sacred, of memories the most tender. No height is so unapproachable in its sublimity, no depth so fearsome in its darkness, that it can check the bold flight of that strong eagle which we call the Scientific Method. But this importunate demand for freedom of inquiry would, to mediæval ears, have been either unintelligible, or rank blasphemy. Only in one direction would the Church permit intellectual activity, and that was in the abstruse science known as Scholastic Theology. The metaphysical side of religion, or the theological side of philosophy, exercised the strongest fascination over the minds of mediæval thinkers during century after century, from Erigena to Occam. At first the science was mainly compounded of theology and logic —an attempt to arrange the whole of religious dogma in a logical system, according to the dialectics of Aristotle, as far as that philosopher was, through the interpretation of Boethius and Porphyry, known to the early scholars. The twelfth century saw a remarkable revival of interest in learning, almost worthy of the name of Renaissance in itself, had it been more fruitful of results. The Latin

Scholasticism

authors began to be sought and read; many colleges were founded; students flocked by the thousand to Oxford and to Paris; and in the bold speculations of Abelard it almost seemed as if Reason were about to re-assert its claim in opposition to Authority. Fortunately for the ecclesiastical hierarchy, this was not yet to be. A fatal direction was given to all this eager enthusiasm, diverting it into a path where its unquenchable ardour could burn itself brilliantly but innocuously away. Early in the thirteenth century a wider knowledge of Aristotle—of his metaphysical, ethical, and physical systems—began to spread through Europe, partly from the cultured Court of Frederick II. in Sicily, where Arabs mingled freely with his other subjects, imparting to them their profound knowledge both of ancient Greek and modern science; partly from the highly educated Arabs of Spain. At first Theology recoiled from this newly discovered philosophy, foreseeing in it a formidable antagonist to her authority. But it was only for a while; and then, understanding that it had an indwelling strength and greatness that would resist all her efforts to crush it, she conceived the daring project of making Ancient Philosophy her servant and ally—of embracing in one great system the whole domain of thought. Upon this all-absorbing pursuit was thenceforth bent the full strength of mental powers as keen as the world has ever known. To its immense demands, to its Sisyphean toil, such giant intellects as that of a Thomas Aquinas, a Duns Scotus, an Albertus Magnus, surrendered themselves in willing slavery. It was a science which could have no ending, or, rather, its ends were all foreknown. Working in upon itself in interminable labyrinths,

drawn out into the subtlest, profoundest disputations, it provided a marvellous training-school for the intellectual faculties, a discipline without which the scientific speculations of the last four centuries would have been impossible; but it was only in this indirect way that it could benefit the race. The Schoolmen were commentators and interpreters rather than original thinkers. Their science could discover nothing new about man and his relation to the world about him, because the axioms on which it was based either gave the final truth about such facts, or declared them to be hallowed mysteries removed from the sphere of inquiry. The 'Sentences' of Peter the Lombard (rigid dogmatic statements gathered from the Bible and the Fathers) were the chief text-book of the schools, and represent both the beginning and the end of the circuitous path of thought. It seems, indeed, a deplorable waste of such immense intellectual capacity. Night and day the Schoolmen would pore over fragments of Aristotle, distorted and disfigured by translation from Greek to Arabic, from Arabic to Latin, still more distorted by bad copying, and adulterated by glosses and commentaries; building up on one such ill-translated sentence a whole mountain of logical subtleties, or perhaps bringing all the powers of their brains to the solution of such questions as, 'Can God know more than He is aware of?' or 'Can God cause that, the body and place being retained, the body shall have no position, *i.e.* no existence in space?' But it is Bacon who holds the brief against the Schoolmen. Of them he says, in a fine passage, too long to be quoted here in full, that they, 'having strong and sharp wits and abundance of leisure and small variety of reading, but

their wits being shut up in the cells of a few authors (chiefly Aristotle, their dictator) as their persons were shut up in the cells of monasteries and colleges, and knowing little history either of nature or time, did out of no great quantity of matter and infinite agitation of wit spin out unto us those laborious webs of learning which are extant in their books.'

Mediæval 'torpor'

Much has been talked about the 'intellectual torpor' of the Middle Ages, a phrase which is somewhat misleading, though not without truth. It is evident that there was little 'torpor' about minds which could grapple with a science before whose complexity the modern intellect stands appalled. But in every other domain of thought a very real torpor did exist. 'The single employment of reason was to expand and develop premises that were furnished by the Church.' And so as regards everything outside theology—the world of living things about them, the structure of their own bodies, the geography of the globe they lived on, the history of their ancestors—the men of the Middle Ages were for the most part in a condition of blind ignorance, of grovelling credulity, which is almost beyond belief.

Arab civilisation

It must not, however, be forgotten that there was one corner of the world where a very different state of things prevailed. While the rest of Western Europe was sunk in darkness and barbarism, the Moorish Kingdom in Spain was nearing the height of its golden age of splendour and learning. Its princes dwelt in palaces almost magical in their beauty and luxury, its cities were well lighted and well paved, its people sober, cultured, and fastidiously clean. Its libraries were rich in

manuscripts, its schools were full of well-taught children. Its deeply-learned philosophers were working out (for the benefit of modern Europe) the foundations of mathematics —both pure and applied; astronomy; chemistry; and medicine. The principles of agriculture were being developed, many such important products as rice, sugar, and cotton being then introduced; Moorish gardens knew no rival for abundance of exquisite flowers and variety of luscious fruit. The breeding of sheep and horses was carried to perfection, as was also the manufacture of rich silken stuffs, of leather, and of steel. Inestimable, indeed, is the debt, which, in these and many other ways, modern civilisation owes to the workers and thinkers of this long-ago Arab kingdom.

Meanwhile their Christian contemporaries, driven back from serious thought, because its only permissible fare was too hard for ordinary digestions, consoled themselves with the songs and stories of chivalry, which, especially in the South, caught much of their glamour and gaiety from the refined, luxurious Arabian society of Cordova and Granada. For not only did the twelfth century see a revived interest in learning, but it was the time when the old misty epics of the heroic age, the *chansons de geste*, were giving place to the new school of romance which is the origin of the modern novel. The *fabliaux* and romances of the *trouvères* (the singers of northern France) were sung and recited not only in the land of their origin, but in England and Germany, and among the Normans of Sicily, whence they influenced the new poetry of Italy. From Provence came the still more brilliant but more ephemeral *arte de trobar*, that 'gay

Trouvères and troubadours

science' which made all Europe musical during the last part of the twelfth and the thirteenth century. This was a fashion rather than a literature—it needed no learning except a skill in numbers; it contained no allusions, mythological, historical, or other, nor even any thought or emotion except of love. Knights and ladies who could not read became adepts at bandying *tensons* in the Courts of Love. For this poetry is only concerned with love and spring—always the adored lady, and always the birds and roses and green woods. There is a deadly cloying monotony in its sweetness. It is only varied by intricacies of rhythm, and by an occasional lash out at clerical inconsistencies, a subject which few mediæval writers could altogether resist. The songs of the troubadours and *jongleurs* were heard in every Court in Europe—princes, kings, the great Hohenstaufen Emperor himself, were proud to enter the ranks of the singers. But it was too slight and artificial to have much vitality or much influence on later literature. It was a 'beautiful flower springing up on a sterile soil.' After the end of the thirteenth century we hear no more of it. Cruelly trampled out of fair Provence in the bitter persecution of the Albigenses, it passed into Catalonia, where it blossomed again for a while, until it was forced to give way before the advance of the more vigorous Castilian literature. The Minnesingers who had echoed its light sweet strains in Germany were replaced by the more prosaic Meistersingers, who made a trade of it and tried to tie down its delicate evanescent gaiety by rules and measurements.

In truth there was no heart for music in Europe in the fourteenth century out of Italy. The scholars were still

desperately wrestling with problems that could never be solved. The people were in a forlorn and miserable condition; they felt that the existing systems—social, political and ecclesiastical—sapped of their strength, had become inadequate for their needs, and yet nothing new had arisen in their stead. Superstitious they had always been, intensely conscious of a supernatural environment, and this environment, in the thirteenth and fourteenth centuries, when the Church had begun to show her vindictive side, and when strange, vague rumours were attacking the foundations of their beliefs, began to assume a dark and sinister aspect. In that century the Black Death devastated Europe, sweeping off in six years no less than twenty-five millions of the people. Well might they feel that death was in the very air they breathed, that they were encompassed on every side by the powers of hell. *We lie in the hell like sheep: death gnaweth upon us,* is the burden of all their utterance. Everlasting punishment is the reiterated theme of the preacher. Painters and poets seem impelled by some dread influence to represent the flames of hell and the agony of tortured souls. This awful fascination is seen at its height in Dante's epic, and in those terrible frescoes by an unknown painter in the Campo Santo at Pisa. More satirically, more rebelliously, is the prevailing gloom reflected in 'Piers Plowman,' the great poem that sums up for England the discontent and bitterness of that dark century.

The gloom of the fourteenth century

In this turbid atmosphere the wildest heresies flourished. The Flagellants wandered from city to city, howling and beating their backs. The Fraticelli permeated

every class, denouncing wealth and spreading the doctrines they had inherited from their prophet, Joachim of Flora—the visionary who, in his 'Everlasting Gospel,' had proclaimed that the reign of the Father had passed, the reign of the Son was passing, and the reign of the Spirit was to come.

CHAPTER II

THE REACTION

At last the awakening came. Very early in the fourteenth century Dante sang the swan song of the Middle Ages, and even as he sang it the world was turning restlessly in its sleep; the long slumber was disturbed by broken fragments of dream, gleams of light, echoes of long silent voices calling to it to rise in all the vigour of adolescence, to shake off, like Samson, the shackles that had bound it, to adventure forth in that glorious May-morning of Time, when all creation lay radiant and mysterious before the eyes of the newly awakened. It was a time of infinite possibilities, to which we who live at the end of a century of violent achievement may look back not without wistfulness —a time when new discoveries of man's own latent powers and the beauty and wonder of the world around him were every day to be made, when new interests and new adventures beckoned to him on every side. We cannot put any date to this awakening; no abruptness marks the initiative of movements so great. We only know that the world slept, and that the world was awake. The

The first signs of Renaissance

first stirrings were shown in the growing spirit of discontent which would not be repressed in the brave words of Wiclif and Huss, and in the paintings of Giotto.

It would be difficult to discuss fully the causes of the Renaissance without running a risk of becoming unduly metaphysical. After all, the history of the race, when seen in perspective, is very like the history of the individual. To most of us come moments of exaltation, of more than usual strength and insight, for which it would be hard to assign this or that material cause; and so it has been at times in the history of nations.

For us, who look back at the Middle Ages with eyes dazzled by the rising sun of the Renaissance, there is, it is true, the danger of over-estimating the gloom that it dispelled. It has been our business in the preceding chapter to dwell on the dark rather than on the bright side of the picture; but the reader will have seen that the Middle Ages were a time of sublime if too visionary ideals, of powerful if misdirected intellectual power, of heroic if fragmentary achievement; will have understood that there is no plain dividing-line between the two periods; that the forces which were so extraordinarily active during the Renaissance were in existence before; that the same elements are to be found in both, though combined in different proportions. But if it is easy to over-estimate the importance of the Renaissance, it is equally easy to under-estimate it. There have been some who, minutely studying the history of those centuries, and seeing how desultory are the first appearances of the modern spirit, how all its meshes of light are interwoven with those of mediæval darkness, have declared the Renaissance to be but a pleasing fiction, originating in the brain

of certain modern historians and critics—Michelet, Taine, Symonds and Pater.

But history is like a great picture. If we wish to understand the effect of its composition, the distribution of its masses of light and shade—if we wish to learn anything of its true significance—we must stand at a respectful distance, half close our eyes if need be. Then, having grasped the meaning of the whole, if we desire to know how this or that effect was produced let us by all means look closely into the brushwork and see how the shadows are made luminous by hidden lights, and how by 'quartering' one bright colour with another the two are brought into harmonious union. This will be very profitable to us; but do not let us call it seeing the picture.

Significance of the term

All misconceptions about the Renaissance arise from a misunderstanding of the term. It is 'Renaissance' rather than 'the Renaissance,' and it is not the name of a period. It is not the fifteenth century nor the sixteenth. We may find at the same moment Renaissance in Italy and Middle Ages in Germany; in Italy itself Florence may be alive with modern energy, while Rome is still wrapt in mediæval slumber. We may call it a movement—the movement by which the nations of Western Europe passed from mediæval to modern modes of thought and life. And yet, even 'movement' seems too definite a word, seems to denote something that has unity and a conscious aim, like the Reformation or a revolution. We must become still vaguer, and say that it was a spirit in the air, a tendency in men's minds: a tendency as strong, perhaps, in the minds—though not as generally diffused through the generations—of Niccola

Pisano, who died in the thirteenth century, or of Roger Bacon, or Frederick II., as in that of Lionardo da Vinci, or Francis Bacon, or Elizabeth. As soon as we begin to narrow the term, misconceptions arise. We must sacrifice precision and keep it at its widest. The Revival of Learning is only a small part of it, the return to Nature only a part less small. Neither of these alone could have produced the painting of Italy, the drama of England, the Reformation, or any of the other practical achievements of the Renaissance. It is possible to find fault with the term Renaissance, as seeming to denote something that is altogether novel; whereas the strength and the wonderfully varied activity of the movement were due to the fact that it was mode up of so many diverse elements, old and new. But it would not be easy to find a term of wide enough significance to cover the whole, and we must make the best of the word we find to our hand; only remembering that the old elements were as much needed as the new, and that as the supporting strength of those was withdrawn or despised, the art, the drama, and the religious movement fell, the first two into languor and artificiality, the third into incoherent disorder.

The Renaissance has been called, in a well-worn but none the less signficant phrase, 'The Discovery of the World and Man.' Each of these terms is full of suggestiveness. The Discovery of the World brings to our minds the discoveries of Columbus, of Da Gama, of Magellan, of Cabot, and the many other famous voyagers who ventured year by year further and further over the unknown seas. In the Dark Ages it was pronounced impious for a Christian to 'so much as speak

'The Discovery of the World'

of the Antipodes,' since no such place is mentioned in the Scriptures. But now, to the men who listened to the stories of the sailors, nothing seemed too strange and new to be possible. The wild luxuriance and variety, the intoxicating sense of latent potentialities, the clashing together of new and bizarre conditions of life which marked off the Renaissance era so distinctly from the more sober times which had preceded it, all received a strong impulse when the adventurers came home with their stirring accounts of countries far away; of 'salvage men' under the palm-trees in the West; of ancient splendid civilisations in the East; of gigantic plants and wondrous foliage; of Eldorado, the land overflowing with gold. These discoveries prepared men's minds for the yet more startling and revolutionary discoveries of the astronomers, which revealed the undreamed-of truth that man and his planet are not after all the great central object of the universe, but mere insignificant units in its tremendous plan [1]—a truth which destroyed at a blow half the dogmas of the theologians. This is the starting-point of modern science, which, advancing thence with rapid strides, has in four centuries almost transformed the world, penetrating the secrets of Nature, and giving to mankind such powers as the wildest dreams of preceding ages could not have anticipated. Galileo, Kepler, Bruno, Tycho Brahe, Harvey —each in his separate way—were soon at work. They made telescopes, and confirmed the theories of Copernicus. They went further, and proclaimed the illimitability of space, and the existence of worlds hitherto unseen. They suggested that ours may not be the only inhabited planet.

[1] Copernicus had formulated his theory by 1507.

They traced the paths of the planets, and even of those dire terrors of the Middle Ages, the comets, finding everywhere law and order instead of miracle and caprice. They anticipated the discovery of the three laws of motion, and the theory of the magnet; they studied natural history, and they explained the circulation of the blood. Galileo was imprisoned, Bruno burnt; but the irresistible advance could not be stayed. Meanwhile Bacon, surveying the whole field of knowledge with that extraordinary intuition which, with him, almost anticipated reason, lent the persuasive power of his unrivalled eloquence to proclaim to the world the method and the mission of the new science. The Discovery of the World also reminds of those inventions which, though some of them had long been known, were now for the first time appreciated and applied—the compass, which aided the enterprise of the discoverers; gunpowder, which struck at the old chivalric pride of caste by making the foot soldier almost as good a man as the cavalier; printing and cheap paper, which swept away the webs of mystification in which the Schoolmen had shrouded the ancient philosophers, by throwing the originals open to all; which destroyed half the prestige of the hierarchy by putting the Bible into everyone's hands. Thus the Discovery of the World brings us to the *return to Nature*—the renewed interest in the world of external things which theologians, during long centuries, had taught was only to be despised and shunned and altogether subordinated to a vaguely apprehended spiritual world. It signifies a new joyousness of life, a delight in all that is beautiful and pleasant, even in the mere luxury of sumptuous living and fine clothing.

By the Discovery of Man we may mean the discovery made by the Humanists of the power and excellence of the untrammelled human intellect, as it was shown in the works of the poets and philosophers of ancient Greece and Rome. This encouraged those who had been trained in the old belief that man's unaided intellect was to be feared and distrusted only a little less than his passions to strike out boldly on new paths of independent thought, trusting to the guidance of their own reason, aided only by the experience of antiquity. At the same time, to men who chafed under the bondage of a moral code which bound them by a thousand minute regulations, repressing all the natural instincts of the body, and who were profoundly dissatisfied with, and embittered by, the corruption that lurked among those who were appointed to administer that code, was revealed a new system, having the sanction of venerated names, which left every man free to develop the highest or the lowest that was in him; a paganism which was frank and unabashed, and which regarded the body and all its instincts with a natural pride that was devoid of self-consciousness. For the Discovery of Man signifies, too, the newly-awakened appreciation of the human form which led to the art that is the crowning glory of the Renaissance. We are all familiar with the gaunt conventional figures that appear again and again in mediæval art; the type which, coming from Byzantium, was reproduced century after century, in the North of Europe as in the South, by pious illuminators and carvers who would have thought it sacrilege to alter the attitude of any saint, or the colour of his robe, from that which was prescribed for him by

The Discovery of Man

tradition. The figures were meagre and stiff, with haggard faces and elongated hands; the drapery hung in long narrow folds, the attitudes were unnatural. And yet we have many proofs that mediæval artists were not incapable of drawing at least a fair human face, if they lacked the anatomical knowledge necessary for the accurate modelling of the figure. The fact is, that the prevalence of this unlovely type arose less from incapacity than from deliberate choice. It originated partly in the belief of many of the Gnostics that it was wrong to represent Christ with any of the comeliness of the heathen gods; partly from the false conception of chastity, which made the monks teach that it was a sin so much as to look upon an undraped human figure (some of the saints made it their boast that for years they had not seen their own bodies), and so to study and draw from it was an undreamed-of enormity; partly, again, from the ideal ascetic life of the Christian, which, with its fastings and self-mortifications, could only produce such a worn, thin, macerated body as the mediæval painters loved to portray. After the twelfth century this old ideal was everywhere modified by softer and more human forms; but it was not until they felt the full enlightening influence of Greek thought and Greek art that men freely advocated the study of the figure from the living model.

The spirit of inquiry

Thus in every direction the free inquiring spirit of man refuses to be longer restrained, breaks down the doors that have been barred against it, and demands of the old authorities that they shall justify their existence or make way for others that are less inflexible. Men are filled with an intense curiosity, a vehement desire to know all there is to be known—ancient

learning, modern science, Oriental magic. They are living out the Faust legend, caring little what becomes of their souls if only this insatiable desire for fuller life and greater knowledge may be gratified. And yet, like Faust, they have an intolerable dread of death—we shall find constant traces of it in their work. This dread was partly, as we have seen, a legacy from the Middle Ages, but it was more and more intensified as the hold on the old faith weakened and as life became richer and sweeter. Much of the work of the Renaissance seems to have been done in desperate haste, which contrasts strongly with the deliberation of mediæval workers; and life after life of its best and most brilliant representatives was burnt out, consumed away in the prime of manhod by this overwhelming greed for life and knowledge.

The spirit of criticism

It was not until the Renaissance was drawing to a close that the spirit of inquiry was succeeded by the spirit of criticism which was to dominate the succeeding age. The earlier Renaissance owes its exuberance and its many-sided activity to the fact that men had not yet learnt to select and reject, but were ready to accept, anything that was classic and anything that was new with undiscriminating zest. We may see this in the Humanists of the fifteenth century, paying equal homage to everything that was antique, good or bad, important or trifling. We may see it in the French under Francis, or the English under Elizabeth, when the people seemed like boys let out into the bright sunshine after being pent for hours in a dull schoolroom, when they are too excited for concerted action, but each jumps and shouts and adds his own happy note to the joyous uproar.

Every man in his humour is the motto of the time. In the whimsical extravagance of their dress, in the quaint fancifulness of their speech, these people make it evident that, the old bondage once cast off, they will own no master but their individual wills. Hence the lawlessness, the worldliness, and the buoyancy of the time. It was only as the early enthusiasm died away, as the brilliant promise was followed by disillusionment and disenchantment, that the critical spirit began to appear. And after criticism comes scepticism. We find it already in Montaigne, who, regarding neither ancient tradition nor individual opinion as infallible, yet allowing his own common sense to guide him in deciding what is reasonable and probable, is one of the first to advocate toleration, patience, and suspension of judgment.

The political conditions that made smooth the way for the Renaissance were, on the one hand, the consolidation of kingdoms, and, on the other, the increasing importance of free burghs. It was, as we have seen, the Feudal System which, with its powerful, unruly barons, most hindered national union and the progress of civilisation. In the fifteenth century the barons in England were almost exterminated by civil war, and the foundations were laid of the strongest, most despotic monarchy this country has known. In France, at the same time, Louis XI. was breaking down one after another the power of those princes of the blood who had practically divided the kingdom among themselves. In the last decade of the century the triumph of the French Crown was finally assured by the acquisition of Orleans; and in the same decade the Moors were driven out of

The consolidation of kingdoms

Granada, and Spain at last became a united kingdom. In all these countries the consolidation of the monarchy meant the establishment of a central court which, under an enlightened monarch, became a centre of culture and refinement, encouraged genius, and promoted literature and art.

A yet more potent factor in the progress of civilisation was the increasing importance of the cities—an importance which was in inverse ratio to that of the baronage. It was in the free elastic cities of Italy, unhampered by any conflict with the Feudal System, that the Renaissance was initiated, and in the North it was the great commercial burghs which, effectually matching the power of the purse against the power of the sword, proved the strongest counteracting influence to the crushing weight of that system. These burghs, with their powerful inter-communal leagues; their system of internal government—democratic in essence if not in name; their enterprising merchant adventurers; their numerous guilds—guilds of religion, merchant guilds, craft guilds (associating the craftsmen and mechanics engaged in particular industries), guilds of rhetoric (associating the same class for purposes of recreation by dramatic entertainments, music, poetry and other enlightened pursuits); with their free schools—established sometimes by the guilds, sometimes by the benevolence of wealthy merchants—were always favourable to individual development, and offered ample opportunity to men of industry and talent to push their way to the front. That this individual development was sometimes in a narrow and provincial groove was mainly due to the fact that these northern cities (such as Antwerp, Bruges,

The rise of the burghs

AUGSBURG COLLEGE & SEMINARY
George Sverdrup Library
MINNEAPOLIS 4, MINNESOTA
940.21
F45

Nuremberg, Augsburg, London or Bristol) were but scattered oases of vigorous life, tenaciously holding their own in the midst of a surrounding waste of feudalism. Thus isolated, it was impossible for them to exercise a wide influence upon the growth of civilisation or to initiate a great movement.

The modern spirit of Italy

It is natural that we should look to Italy for this initiative. She had never known the cramping force of feudalism. So alien was it to her genius that wherever, as in Lombardy and elsewhere, the attempt was made to establish it, the republican spirit proved too strong, and the nobles were irresistibly drawn into the cities, and even in many cases compelled to register themselves as members of the trade guilds or *arti*. The result was that the wealthy burghers of Italy were the equals of princes in culture and refinement, while the Italian peasant, unlike the hopeless, down-trodden serf of the North, was as free, as prosperous, and as lively as he has ever been. The Renaissance was no such time of illuminating discovery for Italy as it was for the Northern nations. She had never known the same 'mediæval torpor,' never wholly forgotten her old civilisation and learning. Still aureoled by her ancient traditions, and quickened by the presence within her boundaries of the seat of ecclesiastical government, she had been a centre of light all through the darkest ages, and from the twelfth century onwards she had made steady progress in all the arts of civilisation, so that in the fourteenth century, while the barons of the North were still herding in their feudal fortresses, where the bones from the last meal lay in the filthy straw that carpeted their dining-halls, the Italian

24312

citizen in his trim villa, with his books, his tapestries, his fountains and gardens, his well-cooked, well-served meals, had attained a degree of true comfort to which modern inventiveness could add but little of real value.

But it was at the cost of her unity, of her very existence as a nation, that Italy led the van of progress. While the other nations were struggling in indistinguishable confusion for the independence and power each at last attained, Italy pursued a proud isolated path. Upholding, on the one hand, the vague ideal of the Holy Roman Empire, and on the other the no less vague ideal of a world-wide theocracy, she had let slip chance after chance of becoming an united kingdom under a single head. All her strength was in her several cities; there was no Italy, no nation, in the true sense of the word. Clinging to her ancient Latin, she had not, before the thirteenth century, attempted to evolve a standard of correct language out of her many dialects. Her dream of regaining universal dominion was never to be realised; but the higher destiny was to be hers of reigning supreme in the empire of thought and knowledge. For the Renaissance was barely in its prime when this ill-compacted nation fell—torn to pieces in the clutches of her foes and rent by factions—and became the submissive prisoner of Spain. But Italy was sacrificed for the sake of modern civilisation. If her rich flowers of art and literature were dashed and spoiled, the fertilising seed was scattered among the nations; if her treasure-houses were ruthlessly robbed, their contents were carried here and there to enlighten, to teach, and to incite to emulation.

As we trace the history of the Renaissance, we shall find that one city is always to the fore. Whether in

scholarship, in literature grave or gay, in painting, in architecture, or in sculpture, it is not Rome, with all her ancient glory, not Venice, with her pomp and beauty and her political prestige, that leads the way for Europe, but Florence, the small city among the Tuscan hills. We must try briefly to understand something of the character and position of this wonderful city in which was incarnate the very spirit of the Renaissance. The history of all the Italian cities after the eleventh century reads like the history of individuals, so widely do they differ in the character of their people, in their government, their opinions, and their interests—so fierce are their quarrels, so bitter their jealousy. By the end of the twelfth century the whole country was ablaze with civic strife. The idea of banding together for mutual protection was unknown to the cities of Italy; each was determined to maintain and increase its own power at whatever cost, and to trample down and devour all that stood in its way. Nor was the discord only between city and city. In almost every town party spirit sometimes reached an almost incredible height, and the streets ran with blood, while every large house was turned into a fortress. The strife between Guelf and Ghibelline raged hotly for centuries, and the nobles in their struggles with the people would pit one city against another for their own advantage.

The hegemony of Florence

Such was the fiery ordeal through which Florence had to pass, and from which, like fine steel, she emerged triumphant and most subtly tempered. At the end of the thirteenth century, when most of her rivals were falling, an easy prey, into the hands of despots, Florence was

entering on her great era with her civil liberties as firmly established as any modern democrat could desire. Her long struggles had developed in her an unexampled political sagacity and self-consciousness. The city, though she had passed through many vicissitudes, maintained a distinctly Guelfic character, and her middle class had developed into a strong and well-organised body of traders and merchants. In the city of the Guelfs nobility of birth was no advantage; no man, however high his lineage, could aspire to civic honours until he had enrolled himself as a member of one of the *Arti* or Guilds of Craftsmen, and every citizen had an equal chance of distinguishing himself by his talents. From the time of Dante until the end of the fifteenth century Florence might be called the brain of the world, for with increased wealth came increased refinement, until the whole city became permeated with such high intellectual activity, such originality of conception, so critical and appreciative a spirit, that it became a saying, '*I Fiorentini essere il quinto elemento.*' It was the Florentines who, when at the time of Dante the want of a national tongue began to be strongly felt, came to the rescue with their characteristic tact. By assimilating into their own (or Tuscanizing) what was best in the other dialects, and throwing out what was provincial and harsh, they then formed that language, so exquisitely modulated and so plastic, which, when it had been impressed with the royal seal of Dante, and had been perfected as prose by Machiavelli, became the model for all succeeding generations of Italians. Dante was the first of the great Florentines. He does not, however, belong to the Revival. In his genius all that was beautiful in the fading mediæval

spirit found its apotheosis. In his great poem are summed up all the faith of the Middle Ages, and all the profundity of Scholasticism. He stands in splendid isolation at the meeting of the ways.

Finally, we have to notice that the Renaissance was the work, not of masses of men, but of individuals. To say that there was something in the atmosphere of the time which was conducive to the emergence of extraordinarily brilliant personalities is no rhetorical flourish, but a statement of simple fact. It is well borne out by what we know of the histories of such vivid, quick-witted, many-sided natures as Lionardo da Vinci, Walter Raleigh, Leo Battista Alberti, and many others. Poets, painters, philosophers, men of letters, all moved together in an intensely sympathetic intellectual *milieu*, animated by the same aims and ideals, and raised by the eclectic spirit of the times to the highest levels, so that they were able to achieve greater things than are possible to the ordinary human intelligence working under ordinary conditions.

The Renaissance the work of individuals

CHAPTER III

THE REVIVAL OF LEARNING

At a time such as the fourteenth century, when old idols were being shattered, old ties loosened, it was very necessary that some standing ground should be found, some standard raised to prevent men from falling into a worse confusion than before. Whence could such a standard be obtained, which should serve as a rallying-point for so many doubting minds and indicate the direction in which scope might be found to develop capacities so long thwarted? Not, certainly, in the later Scholasticism which, though still enthroned in the universities and convents of Northern Europe, was spun out into such tangled webs of wordy subtleties that it had lost all hold on the popular mind, and only served to hinder and trammel those intellects that aspired to rise above the common level. Nor, again, in the already fading flower of chivalric poetry, which, as we have seen, was too slight a thing to satisfy the needs of an adolescent race.

It was a wise instinct which taught a few of the greatest minds of the time to revert for guidance to the age when human faculties had reached the highest point of development, and to revive the study of the literatures of ancient Greece and Rome. These men discerned that,

by the contemplation of the achievements of the past, such confidence in human ability might be regained as it had been the object of mediæval tyrannies to crush. The soundness of this judgment has been abundantly attested by succeeding generations, which have made classical literature the basis of every liberal education. It is true that there are signs at the present day of a reaction in favour of a scientific training; but, even so, the classical revival has done its work, for the whole edifice of modern culture has its foundations deep in the culture of the ancients.

During the Middle Ages, although the Latin language, owing to its value as a medium for communication and its use in the services of the Church, was in constant use, yet not only was it alloyed by the introduction of hundreds of new words—ecclesiastical terms, subtle scholastic terms, as well as many names for everyday objects unknown to the ancients; but the true classic style was lost, and it was looked upon as a carnal vanity to aspire even to ordinary correctness in grammar and composition. 'I account it far from meet,' says Gregory the Great, 'to submit the words of the Divine Oracle to the rules of Donatus' (the grammarian). Virgil, in order to excuse his use in the schools, was represented as a sort of Christian saint by anticipation, and the Æneid as an allegory of the earthly pilgrimage. Besides Virgil, the richest of mediæval libraries possessed little of classic Latin, except, perhaps, Lucan, Boethius, portions of Ovid and Seneca, and Latin translations of some of the works of Plato and Aristotle. Greek was almost entirely lost to Western Europe; it had lingered longest in the Irish universities, from whence came John Scotus Erigena (the

first, or the last, of the Greek scholars of the Middle Ages, according to the point of view from which we regard him). Even in Constantinople, where Greek was still a living language, the rich heritage of ancient literature was allowed to lie unheeded in monastic and other libraries.

Petrarch, 1304-1374

It was the Florentine poet Petrarch (born 1304) who first set in motion those forces which after his death became so extraordinarily active. He is known to us chiefly by his sonnets to Laura; but these only represent the interludes in his life-work, which was to revive classical learning and to cultivate a pure and melodious Latin style instead of the barbarous jargon which passed for Latin in his days. He taught a nation, which was weary and digusted with its old standards, to turn for guidance to the Pagans of old, to turn from the logical absurdities of the Schoolmen to the luminous wisdom of Plato. He taught his countrymen to appreciate the sonorous music of Cicero's eloquence, but he did not, like many of his successors, make style of more importance than matter, but rather sought to express noble and original conceptions in beautiful and harmonious words. The eager and immediate appreciation of his aims by his contemporaries shows that he had sounded the right note. A great desire to know the works of antiquity was kindled everywhere, the immense difficulties in the way only fanning the flame. Never has there been so great and widespread a love of learning as that which permeated Italy during the hundred and fifty years that followed the death of Petrarch. Men's intellects had been starved, or fed on such unsubstantial fare as satiated but did not satisfy. Here was promise of an inexhaustible feast, and men

crowded hungrily, if only in the hope of gathering up some of the crumbs that fell from it.

Petrarch knew very little Greek, but he exhorted his friend and pupil, Boccaccio, to study it, and the young man, whose naturally gay and pleasure-loving disposition is displayed in his Italian writings, thought it his highest happiness to follow the poet's advice, and devoted his life to the acquirement of Greek learning with an enthusiasm that made light of difficulties. In spite of a very indifferent master, texts that were unreliable and hard to decipher, and the absence of the paraphernalia of grammars and lexicons that make the path so smooth for the schoolboy of to-day, Boccaccio attained a fair knowledge of the language, and made a Latin rendering of Homer.

Boccaccio, 1313-1375

Better masters soon appeared. John of Ravenna, once Petrarch's secretary, became a better Latin scholar than any of his predecessors; and in his wanderings from town to town, teaching in universities and schools, he helped to spread the enthusiasm for the *litteræ humaniores*, as the new learning was called. Most of the great Humanists of the fifteenth century were introduced by him to Cicero and other Latin authors, and the same men received their knowledge of Greek from Manuel Chrysoloras, a Greek who, having passed through Florence as an ambassador, was entreated by the eager citizens to return as a teacher (1395). From this time Italy gave herself up to the task of restoring and interpreting the works of the ancients. Her national literature, which had opened so brilliantly with Dante, Petrarch, and Boccaccio, was now entirely neglected.

John of Ravenna

Manuel Chrysoloras

Although Italy became the most erudite nation in the world, and could boast among her scholars men of wide learning and indefatigable energy, not a single masterpiece of literature was produced from the death of Boccaccio to the end of the fifteenth century. The Humanists were not themselves conscious of this. Poggio, Filelfo, and their contemporaries, penned voluminous dissertations on every subject that admitted of treatment in the Ciceronian style, and proudly based their claim to immortality on writings that lie unread and unprinted, and which would only seem to us wearisome and pedantic imitations of classical models: writings in which originality and even common sense are made of no account in comparison with that pure Latinity which as a matter of fact they rarely attained. They were nicknamed 'the apes of Cicero,' and they gloried in the title. This concentration of all their powers on the resuscitation of ancient literature was undoubtedly a great sacrifice, not only of their own fame, but of the welfare of Italian literature; but in their loss is immeasurable gain for us: in this way alone was modern culture made possible—'the Humanists were martyrs for posterity.'

The manuscripts of the classical authors were, at the time of Petrarch, scattered about over Europe in the possession of those who were either oblivious of their existence or ignorant of their value. By the end of the next century they had been found, collated, printed, and put into the hands of the world, that all might read. It was a truly Herculean labour to bring about such a different state of affairs. Poggio, who for many years was Apostolic Secretary; Niccolo de' Niccoli, a wealthy

merchant of Florence, and many other men of learning and wealth, gave up their lives to the quest, and sought far and wide among the monasteries and libraries of Europe.

Poggio Bracciolini, 1380-1459

Sometimes their eager search would be rewarded by the discovery of a portion of a precious treatise of Cicero, the completion of which would be found long afterwards in some distant land. Sometimes they would find in an out-of-the-way corner in a Swiss convent a priceless manuscript whose beginning and end had been ruthlessly cut away. For parchment was dear, and when a monk wished to write a psalter or a litany to sell for a few halfpence, what more easy than to cut a piece from some old roll that nobody cared for, wash off the unholy Pagan writings, and cover it with his own lucubrations instead? These, too, had to be captured by the rescuers, and the original inscription deciphered as far as possible. But the words of Poggio himself will give us the best idea both of the spirit in which he worked and of the difficulties with which he had to contend.

'I verily believe,'[1] he says, 'that if we had not come to the rescue he (Quintilian) must speedily have perished, for it cannot be imagined that a man, magnificent, polished, elegant, urbane and witty, could much longer have endured the squalor of the prison-house in which I found him, the savagery of his jailors, the forlorn filth of the place. He was, indeed, right sad to look upon, and ragged like a condemned criminal, with rough beard and matted hair, protesting by his countenance and garb against the injustice of his sentence. He seems to be stretching out his hands, calling upon the Romans, demanding to be

[1] *Muratori*, xx. 160; translated by J. A. Symonds.

saved from so unmerited a doom. . . . In the middle of a well-stocked library we discovered Quintilian, safe as yet and sound, though covered with dust, and filthy with neglect and age. The books, you must know, were not housed according to their worth, but were lying in a most foul and obscure dungeon at the very bottom of a tower, a place into which condemned criminals would hardly have been thrust; and I am firmly persuaded that if anyone would but explore these *ergastula* of the barbarians wherein they incarcerate such men, we should meet with like good fortune in the case of many whose funeral orations have long since been pronounced.'

Meanwhile Constantinople was full of wars and rumours of wars, and many of the most learned Greeks migrated thence to Florence, where they were sure of an almost royal welcome, especially if they brought with them ancient manuscripts. The fall of Constantinople in 1453 hastened this exodus and threw the remaining stores into the hands of those who were better able to appreciate them than their former owners. By the end of the century all Europe had been ransacked and practically the whole of Greek and Roman literature as it is known to us had been exhumed. It is probable that, had Italy not taken this task upon her when she did, many works of inestimable value would have been lost to us for ever.

The fall of Constantinople, 1453

But, after all, the gathering together of the scattered classics, all-important as it was, formed the easiest part of the great undertaking of the Humanists. Before these mutilated and disfigured manuscripts could be of value to the world they had to be collated and compared, beginnings

and endings had to be found, the maddening mistakes of copyists emended, the meaning of obsolete words hammered out; and all this by the light of a very imperfect knowledge of grammar and a still more imperfect acquaintance with those facts of the mythology, history, and social life of the ancients which alone can give meaning and reality to their writings. However, true enthusiasm knows no difficulties, and as, one by one, the manuscripts were brought to light, they were passed from hand to hand, and the great scholars would often with their own hands transcribe them, emending and annotating as they wrote. In this way considerable libraries were gathered together. Niccolo de' Niccoli collected no less than 800 volumes, and ruined himself in so doing. But this was not the age in which a great scholar might be allowed to want. Cosmo de' Medici gave him unlimited credit at his bank, and in return Niccolo, at his death, left the disposal of his books to his patron, who made them the nucleus of his library of St. Mark.

Niccolo de' Niccoli

The names of this great family of merchant princes, the Medici, are closely associated with various phases of the Renaissance. Cosmo, the great banker of Europe; Lorenzo the Magnificent, his grandson, who was to Florence what Pericles was to Athens; and Leo X., son of Lorenzo, during whose pontificate the setting sun of Humanism shone with a last lurid radiance—all these were enthusiastic and discerning patrons of art and literature. The political position of the family was a unique one. To outward seeming they were quiet, cultured citizens, upholding the democratic liberties of Florence, but in reality they had made themselves the

The Medici

centre of an invisible net-work in which the whole city was entangled. When Cosmo died, in 1464, there was hardly a man of any standing in Florence who was not secretly under his thumb. Though he died fifty years before 'The Prince' was written, there was little of subtle statecraft that Machiavelli could have taught him. With silent, spider-like cunning the Medici sucked the blood of the Beautiful City, until at last, when the awakening came, she had no strength left to struggle. But though it is true that they sapped the liberties of Florence, yet we must not forget that it was owing in very great measure to their enlightened liberality that Florence occupied the position she did in the van of modern culture. Cosmo, partly from natural inclination, partly because he perceived that it was the very surest way of building up his position, gave every possible help and encouragement to the efforts of the Humanists, and expended vast sums of money in the erection of public buildings, for the libraries of which he spared no pains or expense in the accumulation and transcription of books. His agents all over the known world were instructed to be as diligent in the collection of antiquities and manuscripts as they were in the more direct interests of the firm. Cosmo's palace was ever open to men of learning, in whose companionship he found more genuine pleasure than in that of the princes who were ready to acknowledge the powerful merchant as an equal. He provided for the wants of scholars while they were occupied in translating the Greek philosophers and dramatists—not into their native tongue, but into Latin, as being more widely understood. It was Cosmo also who founded the Platonic Academy and placed

Cosmo de' Medici, 1389-1464

Ficino, 1433-1499

at its head Ficino, a young Italian of great intellectual power and of singularly pure enthusiasm for learning.

The Humanists regarded Plato as their guide in morality, as Cicero was in matters of style. The true greatness of Aristotle was obscured to their eyes, so intimately was his philosophy associated with the fine-drawn speculations of the Schoolmen; and they turned to Plato as offering a wider, freer atmosphere, delighting chiefly in the vaguer and more mystical side of his philosophy. The Academists paid him almost divine honours, meeting on his birthday to sing his praises and to wreathe his bust with flowers. Some of the more earnest Humanists, such as Ficino and Pico della Mirandola, made it their life-endeavor to harmonise Platonic philosophy with the Christian religion, and from their efforts sprang that curious new mythology formed by an outward reconciliation of Paganism and Christianity, and a wayward use of incongruous symbols, which found a more forcible expression in the art of that century. Others found in the reversion to ancient standards merely an excuse for atheism and for the most abandoned profligacy. It began to be considered a mark of liberality and culture to reproduce all that was foulest in the lives and the writings of the ancients. Italy was, as we know too well, a sink of iniquities during the fifteenth and sixteenth centuries. Northern Europe shuddered at the tales that were told of her depravity; but whether the frank Paganism of the Humanists or the scarcely-veiled abominations of the Papal Curia were most to blame for this deplorable condition is a question not easily answered. One cannot help thinking that nothing

Pico della Mirandola, 1463-1494

would be more likely to goad into open defiance men whose hold on Christianity was already weakened by their Pagan studies than the immorality of those who were the appointed guardians and teachers of religion.

The irresponsible, wandering lives of the professors of the New Learning tended to intensify their recklessness of morality. The universities for a long while held aloof from the movement, considering the preparation for the three professions—law, theology, and medicine—a more solid and profitable occupation. At most of them, however, as time went by, chairs were established for the teaching of 'Rhetoric' or 'Eloquence,' as the New Learning was called. In the meantime the classical scholars were sure of a welcome at the houses of many princes and noblemen, such as Alfonso, King of Naples, and Frederick the Good, Duke of Urbino; and also at Rome, when the reigning Pope happened, like Nicholas IV., Pius II., or Leo X., to have literary tastes. Wherever these wandering stars appeared they were sure of finding an eager audience gathered together, in the hope that a ray of the new light might fall upon them.

A classical lecture in those days was a somewhat different scene from a lecture at Oxford to-day. In the bare room would be gathered together youths of all nationalities—ragged fellows enough many of them, deeming, like Erasmus, that the purchase of new clothes might stand over while their savings were spent on learning. Among them may be seen reverend greybeards, men of wealth and position who have gladly left their business to take care of itself awhile, drawn by their thirst for this learning that is to make the world seem young again. No

house have they, no copies of the text they are to study, to say nothing of grammars and dictionaries; only their paper and pens, and, what is most important of all, eager and receptive minds. The whole lecture comes straight from the brain of the professor and is imprinted upon theirs own. At the end of the course the blank sheets of paper have become copies of the text, together with a vast mass of erudite notes and illustrations, all of course in Latin. Such a course of lectures represented the patient labour of years on the part of the teacher, and as no man could prepare and carry in his head many such courses, it was evidently better in every way that he should pass on from one place to another. Not only were the scholars honoured by princes as friends and teachers, but the highest offices of state were thrown open to them, a power of writing public documents in elegant Latin being considered the greatest qualification for the position of ambassador or secretary. Even the Pontificate itself was obtained by Nicholas V. on no higher ground than his scholastic attainments.

Of the literary men of the first half of the fifteenth century no one did more for philological learning than Lorenzo Valla, who reduced the style of the classical writers to a science, with fixed principles and rules, instead of being content, like his contemporaries, with mere copying. His book was of the greatest value to students at the time, and for long afterwards. Valla's exposure of the pretended Donation of Constantine places him among the few Italian Humanists who rendered any direct service to the liberation of the intellect from ecclesiastical tradition.

Lorenzo Valla, 1406–1457

After a time the demand for these wandering professors ceased. They had done their work, and had enriched the many with the knowledge that had been the envied treasure of a few. By the time of Lorenzo the Magnificent, who succeeded to the Presidency of Florence in 1469, the ideal of the earlier Humanists was attained, and all Italy had absorbed the new culture. The passion for antiquity had laid hold of the very heart of the people. They threw themselves back into the past, and tried to revive Roman customs and even Roman dress. They baptized their children by Pagan names. Nothing was too sacred to be touched with the classical varnish. God was addressed as *Jupiter Regnator Olympi;* the images of the saints became *simulacra sancta Deorum.* Painting, sculpture, and architecture were penetrated with the same spirit. Meanwhile, mere scholarship was no longer a passport to fame. The men whose names have made the latter part of this 'solemn fifteenth century' so memorable were men of many-sided, comprehensive genius: men who were able to create as well as to imitate.

It became the fashion for the learned to gather together in coteries and academies for dicussion and mutual instruction. Of these groups there is none so famous as that which gathered round Lorenzo de' Medici. The scene has been so often described that it is familiar to us all: the gardens at Fiesole, overlooking the Beautiful City, whose wonderful dome and many towers are gilded by the rays of the setting sun; the young president (himself a poet, and the first to reawaken the music of his own long-neglected Italian), laying aside for a while the responsibilities of an intricate statecraft, and listening, now

Lorenzo de' Medici, 1448-1492

to Ficino as with earnest enthusiasm he would propound the strange dreamy religion he had woven out of Christianity and Platonism, now to a singing boy carolling some wild carnival song that Lorenzo himself had made. Pico was there too, Pico della Mirandola, the beautiful mystical youth who into his brief thirty years crowded more of life and love and thought than others might into a century, whose head was filled with all the learning and wisdom of the ancients, strangely mingled with mediæval mystery and cabalistic lore. Leo Battista Alberti, too, was there, another typical Renaissance spirit, brilliant and versatile, overflowing with health and strength and vigour, able, like Lionardo da Vinci and other heroes of the Renaissance in Italy and, later, in England, to do a thousand different things, and to do them all well. At twenty he had written a Latin comedy which passed for an antique; but such men could not, like the Humanists, be content to make pure scholarship their end and aim, and to find their highest expression in slavish imitation of the ancients. Alberti is famous as an architect, painter, poet, mathematician and composer. Wandering in the garden near this group of brilliant men, but not yet venturing to join them, might have been seen a young lad, moody and unhandsome, behind whose brooding brows thronged visions that would one day make his fame outshine theirs as the sunlight does the moonlight, for the boy's name was Michael Angelo Buonarotti. Another member of this distinguished band was Politian, who, in 1483, was appointed professor of Greek and Latin at Florence. With him, classical scholarship in Italy attained its highest development. All that

Leo Battista Alberti, c. 1405-1472

Politian, 1454-1494

the earlier students had striven after was at last realised in Politian. Latin was to him a living language, and his sonnets and odes, if they lack that spontaneity which alone could make them immortal, have true Augustan facility and sweetness.

Meanwhile, just at the right moment to crown the work of the Humanists, by placing beyond the reach of Time's destroying touch the works which they had exhumed with so great toil, and to enable all the world to enjoy the fruits of their labours, the art of printing was invented. The first classic printed at Florence was Virgil, which was issued from Lorenzo's press in 1471. Before the end of the century more than 5,000 books had been printed in Italy. The most important press for classics was that of the Aldi, at Venice, which was established in 1490 for the printing of Greek, and it is the best example of a kind of publishing academy not uncommon at that time. Hither well-known scholars would come and dwell for a time, while they compared manuscripts, and carefully weighed the different readings of a text before it was given to the world. Many of the compositors were Greek or Cretan, and no language was spoken but Greek, so that the house formed a little Hellenic oasis, and must have given a great impetus to the study of the classics.

The Aldine Press

But though it might have seemed that Italy was now to reap the fruits of her long years of self-devotion and toil, Fate ordained that it should not be so, and the story of classic learning passed to the nations of the North. Politian forms the connecting link, for among his pupils were most of the pioneers of learning on this side of the Alps—Reuchlin, Grocyn, Linacre, and others. There were

many reasons for the gradual decay of learning in Italy during the sixteenth century, the first of which was the expulsion of the Medici from Florence in 1494, after which that city, divided by party struggles, ceased to be the centre of light and learning. Then Italy became a battlefield for foreign armies, and all the land resounded with the tumult of war and the fall of ruined cities; but none the less the scholars worked on, undisturbed by the direst catastrophes. 'With the obstinacy of insects' they clung to their antiquarian ideals, becoming more slavishly Ciceronian than ever, not seeing that they worshipped a form from which the life-blood was fast ebbing away. This was Humanism in its decadence. Chief among these later Humanists was Bembo, whose fame, however, rests on higher ground than his Latinity, quintessence of Ciceronianism as it was. Bembo's pedantry is admirably illustrated by his well-known advice to his friend Sadoleto, to abstain from reading the Epistles of St. Paul lest he should spoil his style. And both these men were Apostolic Secretaries!

Bembo, 1470-1547

When Florence ceased to be the radiating centre of culture her place was taken by Rome. In 1513 Leo X. became Pope, and in his Court was revived all the brilliance that had surrounded his father at Florence; but, of course, with far more pomp and splendour. Pope, cardinals, bishops, priests, all were men of letters of the luxurious, epicurean type. In fact, almost every man in Rome was either a poet or a patron of poets. For a short time literature flourished in the wildest luxuriance. Rome was a hotbed of vice, but a hotbed which produced brilliant flowers. Of the young Italian literature, which then

appeared so promising, we shall speak in the following chapter. It, as well as the decadent Humanism, received a blow from which it never recovered in the sack of Rome in 1523, which scattered the poets and scholars broadcast, many of them dying in poverty and misery. Finally, any hope of a recrudescence of the free inquiring spirit of the Renaissance was extinguished by the Catholic Reaction, with its icy, crystallizing touch, and its panic terror of unorthodoxy. By the end of the sixteenth century there was hardly any Greek learning left in all Italy.

The sack of Rome, 1523

The story of the spread of the New Learning among the nations north of the Alps takes, inevitably, a very different form from the story of Italian Humanism. There was no need again for the strenuous toil of reconstructing the ancient languages. Italy had borne the burden and the heat of the day; France, Germany, and England had but to apply the material prepared for them. Thus, though these nations started in the race a full century later, they were able in a very short time to overtake and even to surpass Italy. At the end of the fourteenth century a community was established in the Netherlands called the *Brethren of the Common Life*, whose members aimed at reforming education by basing it upon the study of the Bible and the Latin classics instead of Scholastic Theology. Under their auspices several schools were established in the Netherlands and Germany, which became the 'Nurseries of Humanism,' and in many of which, by the year 1470, it was possible to acquire the rudiments of Greek. Hegius was the rector of one of the earliest of these, that at

Humanism in Germany

Deventer, where Erasmus was educated as a child. The school at Munster was presided over by Langius, who edited or corrected several Latin classics, which were printed in Germany at this time; but his friend Agricola exercised a greater influence upon the revival of letters in Germany, and was a more distinguished scholar. He had spent much of his time in Italy, and was zealous that his own country should obtain an equal reputation for learning. Agricola was hardly excelled, even by Politian, in free and graceful use of Latin, and his letters—which, after the fashion of the day, were frequently written in Greek—were polished and correct. The chief difficulty with which classic learning in Germany had to contend was the clamorous opposition of the mendicant friars, most of whom were sunk in the most hopeless ignorance, a condition which they complacently accepted.

Agricola, 1443-1485

Although the Germans ranked next to the Italians in devotion to the New Learning, the French seem to have been beforehand in point of time, for, as early as 1458, a reluctant consent to the teaching of Greek was wrung from the University of Paris. And it was there that, about 1470, Reuchlin, the greatest classical scholar of his day out of Italy, first acquired the rudiments of Greek. Reuchlin made such good use of his meagre opportunities that, by the time he visited Italy in 1482, he astonished the great scholars whom he met, and caused the old Greek master Argyropulus to exclaim, on hearing him translate Thucydides: 'Our banished Greece has flown beyond the Alps.' Unfortunately, Reuchlin's influence over his contemporaries was limited by his falling a victim, like Pico and other

In France

Reuchlin, 1455-1522

great emancipated minds, to the fatal fascinations of Cabalistic Philosophy.

Hermonymus

Up to this time, though there were many indications of a revived interest in Latin literature, France could boast of no author who was able to write good classic Latin, much less Greek; but a certain Spartan, called Hermonymus, who settled in Paris in 1472, had the honour of teaching (though, it must be confessed, very badly) the two men who were destined to raise scholarship to its highest pitch in France and Germany: Budæus in the one, Erasmus in the other. Hermonymus was succeeded in 1495 by a far greater scholar, Lascaris, who came to Paris from Florence, and was able at last to infuse among the French students a little of his Italian ardour for antiquity. From this time onwards Hellenic studies made steady, though not rapid, progress. The spread of classic learning in France, as in Italy, was immensely helped on by the work of the scholar printers, such as Badius (who came to Paris from one of the schools of the Brethren of the Common Life); the Estiennes, and Gourmont, who, from the year 1495, kept up a constant succession of editions of Latin authors, although it was not until 1507 that any serious attempt was made at printing in Greek character. This shows that although D'Étaples, Erasmus, and Budæus were already working hard to promote it, the study of Greek had not yet become generally popular.

Lascaris, c. 1445-1535

Budæus, 1467-1540

Budæus, however, became the most profound Greek school in Europe. In comparing him with the Italian Humanists, whom he far excelled, we must remember that the study of Greek had been very greatly

facilitated by the Aldine and other publications of Greek texts. Budæus is best known to posterity by his 'Commentaries on the Greek Language,' which, though somewhat rambling, has been of immense value to succeeding lexicographers, and may still be read with advantage.

Erasmus, 1466-1536

But it is Erasmus who is pre-eminently famous as the embodiment of all that was meant by the New Learning—its humanity, its tolerance, its application of the learning of the schools to matters of every-day life. Erasmus was, in fact, the first Modern. He seems to belong almost as much to England as to his native land, not only by his sympathies and friendships, but also because it was at Oxford that he received his first adequate instruction in Greek, since he was not able to afford the journey to Italy. We must retrace our steps a little to see how this had become possible.

Humanism in England

In England, during the first half of the fifteenth century, learning seemed to be at the lowest ebb. Oxford was almost deserted, and its Latinity became a by-word. Of Greek there was none. Here and there, it is true, was a man of wealth and position, who, having travelled in Italy, and having caught the enthusiasm for letters, endeavoured on his return to establish himself on the model of the Italian princely patrons, gathering scholars around him, and causing translations of the classics to be made.

One of the first of these pioneers of learning was Henry Beaufort, Bishop of Winchester, at whose invitation no less a scholar than Poggio Bracciolini spent eighteen months in this country. But the great Humanist received no very favourable impression of the English people. He found them given up to eating and drinking, trading, and

farming. There were no manuscripts to be found, and no interest was felt in the search which was the absorbing object of his life.

Humphrey, Duke of Gloucester, was another patron of scholars who approached nearer to the Medician model. He had many friends among the learned Italians. To the Bodleian Library he presented a valuable collection of manuscripts, most of which, unhappily, were destroyed in the partial reaction against classical learning during the reigns of Edward and Mary. A few other such attempts were made to acclimatise Italian scholarship, but, during the early part of the century, without much effect. The Wars of the Roses were, of course, a serious hindrance to noble patronage. And the English are not readily moved to such enthusiasms. The New Learning had to give proof that it was something more than a new-fangled 'accomplishment' before it commended itself to the practical common sense of the people. They saw that the Universities clung with obstinate conservatism to the teaching of the Schoolmen, and they mistrusted the new unauthorised movement. But there were forces at work preparing the way for better things, chief of which was the ever-increasing discontent with ecclesiastical unreason and oppression, felt to be intolerable by the most devout Catholics, as well as by those in whose hearts there still lingered some echo of the teaching of Wiclif. Then came Caxton, with his press and his enthusiasm, awakening an interest in their own literature among the better educated. At last

Vitelli

Oxford began to move. In 1488 an Italian scholar, Vitelli, was allowed to lecture there, and to give some idea of the great movement that was

revolutionising thought in the South. Cambridge next, under the guidance of Fisher, gradually allowed herself to be convinced. It was from Vitelli that the rudiments of Greek were learned by Grocyn, who afterwards travelled to Italy and studied under the first Latin and Greek scholars of the day—to wit, Politian and Chalcondylas. On his return, in 1491, he began to lecture at Oxford. Linacre, afterwards physician to the king, followed in Grocyn's footsteps, and endeavoured to improve the existing condition of medical science by making a translation of Galen. Some years later he founded two lectureships in medicine, one at Oxford, the other at Cambridge. Classical learning had now really taken root in England, and it flourished so well that Erasmus, when he left England in 1499, was able to say (though, surely, in a panegyric mood) that there was 'nothing more to be sought in Italy save the pleasure of travelling.' Erasmus judged English learning from the little knot of enthusiasts whose friend he became, and who included, besides Linacre and Grocyn, Archbishop Warham, Colet, Latimer, and More.

Grocyn, c. 1446-1519

Linacre, c. 1460-1524

Englishmen had found out the practical use of this New Learning, not only in science, but for still higher purposes. The Italian Humanists were 'too much occupied with learning the lessons of antiquity to think of applying them, or even to find out that they had any application'; but when the cup of learning was passed on to the graver men of the North, they perceived the infinite value of a knowledge of the old languages as the means of freeing the Christian religion from the weight of ecclesiastical tradition that was threatening to extinguish it. No one

did more for the advancement of learning in England than Colet, the Dean of St. Paul's. This man had travelled in Italy, had mingled with the brilliant circle of Lorenzo the Magnificent; but all its culture, all its Paganism, even its enthusiasm for antiquity, passed him lightly by, and he came home possessed by the one conviction that in the New Learning lay the only possible salvation for religious faith. It was only in Italy that the study of the classics had so paganising an influence upon morality. Erasmus, More, Reuchlin, Melanchthon, and others whose names are associated both with the Reformation and the Revival of Learning did not, like the Humanists, confine themselves to Greek and Latin, but also studied Hebrew, their object being to raise the Bible from the oblivion and neglect into which it had been allowed to lapse. The essential difference between the Renaissance in Italy and in the North may be well illustrated by contrasting the attitude of any of these men towards ancient literature with that of Politian or Bembo—the Italians, with their extraordinary sensitiveness to form, absolutely captivated and carried away by its perfect style; the others seeking, and rejoicing to find, in the writings of the old civilisation knowledge so practical, and teaching so helpful, for all the new problems that were daily besetting them.

Colet, c. 1467-1519

It was not until after the accession of Henry VIII., who was a friend to learning all his life, and especially before headstrong selfishness and insatiable appetite had obscured those good qualities of head and heart which, at his accession, made the prospect seem so hopeful, that Colet was able to carry out a long-cherished design by founding the Grammar School of St. Paul's. In this he

was helped by Erasmus, who compiled fresh grammars for its use. The school was intended to advance sound classical learning and enlightened religion, while scholastic logic was to be entirely excluded. In return for his care to give the young generation those golden opportunities which he himself had lacked (for he was well on in years when he began to study Greek) the pious founder makes but one request from his scholars: 'Lift up your little white hands for me,' he says, 'for me which prayeth for you to God.' The novelty of his system raised a storm of protest, and 'no wonder,' wrote Sir Thomas More, 'for your school is like the wooden horse in which armed Greeks were hidden for the ruin of barbarous Troy.'

Meanwhile Erasmus was rapidly becoming the foremost figure in the educated world. The first work to bring him into prominence was his 'Adages,' a collection of notes and illustrations upon classical proverbs and idioms, in which his vast learning and keen observation are fully displayed. Many of his remarks are very significant of the temper of the time, and it is a wonder that their author escaped persecution. He attacks kings and princes with the freedom and bitterness of a modern anarchist. 'The folly of princes has,' he says, 'inflicted the greatest misery on mankind.' 'Noble cities are created by the people, and are destroyed by princes; the commonwealth grows rich by the industry of its citizens, and is plundered by the rapacity of its princes.' He compares them to the eagle, with its 'hoarse threatening scream and its rapacious wicked eyes,' 'hateful to all, the curse of all.' Monks are still more abhorrent to him. He compares them to beetles, 'dingy, filthy and vile . . . whom it is a disgrace even to over-

come, and whom no one can either shake off or encounter without some pollution.' The same themes reappear in his 'Encomium Moriæ,' or 'Praise of Folly' (with a pun on the name of his friend More), in which he triumphs over the ignorance and bigotry which he believed to have received a death-blow by the accession of the debonair young scholar, Henry VIII. Erasmus, after the manner of his time, was engaged in many controversies, one of the chief of which was that with the Italian Humanists. As we have seen, the Italian scholars of this period had become more slavishly pedantic than ever; many of them, not content with imitating the style of Cicero, would use no word or case of a word which could not be found in their model. They polished and repolished their writings until they eliminated every trace of originality. Erasmus attacks them in the dialogues entitled 'Ciceronianus.' 'Let your first and chief care,' he says, 'be to understand thoroughly what you undertake to write about. That will give you copiousness of words, and supply you with true and natural sentiments. Then will it be found how your language lives and breathes.'[1] This is certainly a just description of his own methods, and of his vigorous, spirited, and yet graceful Latin.

In the year after Henry's accession, Erasmus' friends in England prevailed on him to come to Cambridge and teach Greek. Of this university he says, in 1516: 'Scarcely thirty years ago nothing was taught here but the "Parva Logicalia," "Alexander," those antiquated exercises from Aristotle and the "Quæstiones of Scotus"' (all stock text-books of scholastic learning). 'As time went on better studies were added, a new, or at any rate a renovated,

[1] Hallam, *History of European Literature*, vol. i. p. 449.

Aristotle, and a knowledge of Greek literature. What has been the result? This university is now so flourishing that it can compete with the best universities of its age.' Gradually the New Learning took hold of the hearts of the people as it had done in Italy, though not in the same degree as there; and by 1520 we are told that 'The students rush to Greek letters; they endure watching, fasting, toil, hunger, in the pursuit of them.'

Sir Thomas More, 1478-1535

The brightest light of the English Humanists, and the only one who will bear comparison with the Italians as a classical scholar, is Sir Thomas More, the man who won the love of all his contemporaries by his sweetness of temper, his gaiety, his charm of manner, and his brilliant wit, no less than by the steadfast courage with which he sacrificed his life in a losing cause. And his chief work, the 'Utopia' (1516), stands out as the one permanent monument of the English Revival of Letters. Writing as the courtier and friend of the most despotic monarch that has ever ruled this kingdom, the eagle-eyed thinker looks forward to a time when justice and reason shall be the guiding lights of life. His description of the imaginary kingdom of Utopia is based on Plato's Republic; but Plato is left behind in More's searching inquiries into the problems of political justice, freedom of conscience, of labour, and of crime, and in his far-sighted anticipation of most of those social reforms which have only of late years been brought about. In some respects, indeed, we yet fall behind the standard of Utopia; for instance, in community of goods, the nine hours' working day, and compulsory labour. More is the first of the privileged classes to champion the cause of the poor. 'The existing condition

of Society is,' he says, 'nothing but a conspiracy of the rich against the poor.' And how modern is the ring of this sentence: 'The rich devise every means whereby they may in the first place secure to themselves what they have amassed by wrong, and then take to their own use and profit, at the lowest possible price, the work and labour of the poor. And so soon as the rich decide on adopting these devices in the name of the public they become law.' Travelling over regions almost unexplored before, More takes human reason as his guide, and human welfare as his goal; hence his book may well be called the flower of the Humanistic movement, taking the word Humanism in its fullest significance. In Utopia, streets are broad and bright, while in London they are narrow and filthy; every house has fine windows of glass instead of mere smoke-holes, and its piece of garden at the back. In every village there is a school, free to all. No man may insult another's religion, and each may worship as his conscience dictates. No atheist, however, is eligible for public offices, because his opinions, for which he is to be pitied rather than blamed, are held to be degrading to mankind. The Utopians have the power to remove their Sovereign 'on suspicion of a design to enslave his people.' In his views upon punishment, More is especially modern. He saw, as few were able to see for many years after he had passed away, that punishment should be proportionate to the crime, and intended for reform rather than for revenge. He advises that criminals should be 'so used and ordered that they cannot choose but be good, and whatsoever harm they did before, the residue of their lives to make amends for the same.'

Besides the 'Utopia,' there was very little direct literary

product of the Revival of Learning in England. This is partly to be accounted for by the violence of the Lutheran party, which threatened to extinguish classical learning altogether at the universities, and which threw discredit upon scholarship because the two were still inseparably associated together in the minds of the people. So widespread was this false impression that Henry was loth to take strong measures against the Reforming party for fear of harming his friends the scholars. But the young plant was too hardy to perish easily. Steadily and silently it grew, gathering vigour for its luxuriant blossoming-time, when Elizabeth was Queen and the days of persecution were over.

Grammar schools were established here and there by Henry and by Edward, in which Latin at least, and sometimes Greek, were brought within reach of the middle classes. Erasmus was succeeded at Cambridge as Greek Lecturer by Richard Croke, a distinguished Englishman who had been teaching at Leipsic. After him came Wakefield, Smith, and Cheke, the two latter exercising great influence on the spread of Greek. Oxford, though it contained more partisans of the old régime, did not lag far behind.

The best known of the group who surrounded Cheke at Cambridge was Ascham, famous as the father of English prose. It was owing principally to his influence as the tutor of Henry's children that classical scholarship became so fashionable among the young people of the Court. Elizabeth, as everyone knows, could speak both Latin and Greek by the time she was sixteen, and had read Cicero and Livy, besides being

Ascham, 1515-1568

well versed in the French and Italian literatures of the day. Lady Jane Grey is another familiar example of this high standard of education, which is the more surprising when we remember that, so far, no Greek grammars or lexicons had been published in England, and hardly any texts, and that there were not more than one or two libraries of any importance in the country.

Meanwhile, in France, too, there was steady progress in classical learning, though, except Budæus, and perhaps Calvin, she could boast of no distinguished scholar. Francis I., who loved to imitate all that was Italian and cultured, established the Royal College at Paris (in 1531) for the study of Latin, Greek and Hebrew, and here was maintained for some years a series of eminent teachers, the value of whose work was hindered, however, by the obstinate opposition of the university and of the great ecclesiastics.

In Germany, during the storm of the Reformation, the schools naturally suffered even more than in England, and they would have been in worse case had it not been for the care of Melanchthon, who, though the friend and follower of Luther, was one of the most distinguished men of learning of his day, and fully appreciated the desirability of encouraging classical education as a foundation for reform. He improved the preparatory schools, or *gymnasia*, and persuaded the universities to maintain Greek and Latin professorships. By the middle of the sixteenth century, in spite of the distrust of the monks and the fanatical contempt of some of the Reformers, Germany was on a level with Italy as regards general diffusion of learning

Melanchthon, 1497-1560

and the number of great scholars, and far above England and France.

As for Spain, she remained for a long while the refuge of the dethroned Scholastic learning and of the barbarous mediæval Latin; but she was too near to Italy for the rays of the new light not to reach her at last. Until the fourteenth century she possessed no university except Salamanca, and that in an unsettled condition. It was the custom, therefore, for young Spaniards of the higher ranks to seek their education abroad, and especially at Bologna, where, in 1364, the college of St. Clement was founded for their especial benefit. But though in the early years of the fifteenth century there were in Spain a few isolated scholars in advance of their time, such as the Marquis of Santillana (1398-1458), who caused translations to be made of Virgil, Ovid, Seneca, and other Latin authors, yet the New Learning made little advance until towards the close of the century, when, at the resuscitated University of Salamanca, and the newly established one at Alcalà, lectures were given by Arias Barbosa, a pupil of Politian, and by Lebrixa, who, in profundity of scholarship, was almost the equal of Erasmus and Budæus. In Spain, more than in the rest of Europe, had the Revival to contest every step of the way with the prejudices of ignorance and superstition. It was strongly associated in men's minds with the Lutheran heresies, and many persons whose only fault was scholarship, such as Sanchez, a great Latin scholar, Luis de Leon, a Hebrew critic, and Mariana, the historian, were summoned before the Inquisition to avow their orthodoxy.

Humanism in Spain

Barbosa

Lebrixa

CHAPTER IV

THE RENAISSANCE IN LITERATURE

Section I.—In Italy

We have seen how, in the fourteenth century, the nations had become possessed by a spirit of unrest, of revolt, of self-conscious activity. We have also seen how a great part of this energy was directed towards the re-absorption of the learning of ancient Greece and Rome. We have now to consider the new literatures which were produced by the influence of this regained classic culture upon the reawakened spirit of national activity. In Italy the splendid promise of the fourteenth century, when the rest of Europe was in darkness, followed by the strenuous toil of the fifteenth, gave every hope for great achievements in the future. But the promise was not to be fulfilled. Abundant and brilliant though it was, the new literature failed for lack of virile force. Unless the spirit of a people be great, its literature cannot be great; and by the end of the fifteenth century the strength of the nation was sapped. Patriotism was dead, morality was dead, religion was a burlesque. The new literature had all the brilliance of premature decay; it was wonderfully picturesque; it was witty, graceful, musi-

Weakness of Italian literature

cal, voluptuous; but it never again touched the spiritual grandeur of the 'Divine Comedy.' There was no lack of genius in a generation that produced Ariosto, but the want of moral earnestness deprived it of all its force; and the bulk of the work produced is only of value to us as showing the source whence the literatures of France, England, and Spain were derived.

The 'Golden Age' of Italian literature lies between the time of Lorenzo de' Medici's accession to the dictatorship of Florence in 1473, and that of the sack of Rome in 1527. But the literature which then flourished so luxuriantly was directly initiated by the great triumvirate of the fourteenth century—Dante, Petrarch, and Boccaccio. Dante is one of the few pre-eminent spirits that refuse to be classed with any particular age or movement. The materials he used were mediæval, such as he found ready to his hand—old themes, many of them, well worn by generations of use. It is his own genius which has ennobled them, and breathed into them eternal freshness. The 'Vita Nuova,' with all its marvellous beauty and freshness, is but the culmination of a long series of love poems, from the light amorous lyrics of Troubadours and Trouvères, to the mystical intense sonnets of Guido Guinicelli, Dante's immediate predecessor. Love in the 'Vita Nuova' is sublimed into a purely spiritual emotion, raising the soul into the highest realms of transcendental thought; and yet, in its note of utter sorrow, it finds an echo in every grief-stricken human heart. Again, in the 'Divine Comedy,' written in order to glorify the memory of his 'Most Blessed One,' Dante takes the popular forms of allegory and vision; he takes the thoughts

Dante, 1265-1321

and teachings of Scholastic philosophers about the world beyond, and he informs these elements with a spirit so vast, so all-comprehensive, and yet so vitally and intensely human, that long after the theories on which it is based are disproved and thrown aside, the great poem stands unshaken as the one epic of the soul of man. Dante had nothing to do with the Revival of Learning. It is in his use of Italian as a medium that he is most nearly related to the Renaissance. Partly from a patriotic desire to promote the formation of a literary Italian, partly because he perceived how eminently the sonorous melody of his own tongue was suited for his purpose, he denied himself the wider range of readers that Latin would have given him, and used the *dolce stil nuovo* (or 'sweet new style') of Tuscany, thus raising the still uncertain half-accepted idiom into a literary language.

Petrarch, 1304-1374

The position of Petrarch is much more easily apprehended. He was, as we have seen, the first to direct attention to the value of classic culture. It was too soon to expect much in his work that could be called the fruit of such studies, but the poet had from a child a wonderful instinct for style, and a delicate ear, which enabled him to appreciate and imitate the qualities that give strength and sweetness to the Latin of Cicero and Virgil. By uniting these qualities to his own melodious Italian, he produced lyric verse of such grace and dignity that it caused the emulation and despair of many generations of imitators. Though born seventeen years before the death of Dante, he has in his look-out upon life none of the mediævalism or mysticism of the great master. His sonnets in praise of Laura treat of love as the modern

poets treat it, idealised indeed, but still the absorbing human passion, with its mingling of good and ill, of joy and sorrow. The poets who came after chose Petrarch as their master in preference to Dante. Dante's material was mediæval; his language was not the perfected Italian of Petrarch; and besides, the men of the Renaissance could not scale the heights where the elder poet was at home. It was only in art that the Italian Renaissance touched the sublime. The keynote of the time was that which Boccaccio sounded—a frank, unabashed enjoyment of the things of this world; indifference or scepticism with regard to all that lies beyond or above it. The only enthusiasm left when the enthusiasm for antiquity died away was the adoration of beauty, and it was by the pictorial sense that poets and *novellieri* apprehended beauty. They rejoiced in form, and colour, and delicate detail, as if they had been painters, making matter of small account in comparison with style.

When Dante's wonderful vision died away, Love was left soaring in the empyrean—almost out of range of mortal vision. If Petrarch brought it down nearer to human ways, it was Boccaccio who caught it by the wings and made it the sport of the men in the street. Boccaccio the *bourgeois*, son of a Florentine burgher and a Parisian grisette, was born in 1313. Gay, sensuous, pleasure-loving, he takes life as he finds it, laughing at its sins and follies, shrugging his shoulders at its goodness; but venerating its genius and worshipping its beauty. The 'Decameron,' the collection of tales by which he is best known, has been called the Human Comedy, as the antithesis of the 'Divine Comedy.' In it he laughs in the

Boccaccio, 1313-1375

face of all the spectres that had chilled and awed a superstitious world. Idealising nothing, shocked at nothing, he sets down all he sees around him: the horrors of the plague; the love-intrigues of disloyal wives and faithless monks; the comic buffooneries of the shop and the street; the joyous gaieties of rich young men and maidens. Caring only for the picturesque, he confuses Pagan and Christian mythology with easy indifference. He has little indeed in common with the proud disdainful spirit of Dante, whose life he wrote, and whom he endeavoured to interpret to his own generation. If Petrarch found a host of imitators in the Golden Age, widely though he was sundered from it by the profoundness of his emotions, it was natural that Boccaccio should exercise a still greater influence. His prose at its best is very charming—luxuriant, picturesque, rhythmic. It suffers from the defects of its qualities—overloading, verbosity, circumlocution—faults which were inevitably exaggerated by imitators, and which caused Boccaccio's influence over later prose to be unfortunate.

After Boccaccio's death in 1375, there followed the lull of a hundred years, during which all the intellect of the nation was devoted to humanistic studies, and the course of Italian literature ran in obscure channels. Even Dante was forgotten in the worship of Virgil, Cicero and Plato. But when the task was accomplished, and Italy was once more in touch with her great past, the national temperament emerged just as it had shown itself in the fourteenth century, only having exchanged some of the enthusiasm and reverence of youth for the cynicism of middle life.

The first scholar of distinction to attempt a fusion between classic culture and popular literature was Leo

Battista Alberti, who, in his 'Trattato della Famiglia,' points out the folly of abandoning a tongue which was not only free from anything distasteful, but had the additional merit of being generally understood. But the true native melody was really awakened by Lorenzo de' Medici, who exerted his immense influence as a statesman and a patron of art and letters, to restore to its rightful position the language that Dante and Petrarch had used. Lorenzo the Magnificent was no great poet. His verses are such as one would expect from a brilliant highly cultivated man of the world. They are clever, racy, picturesque, and—in accordance with the fashion—not a little obscene. And yet here, in Lorenzo's poetry, the last place in the world, perhaps, that we should have looked for it, we find touches of a quite modern interest in the simple doings of the peasants; not the languishings and pipings of Arcadian shepherds, but the homely love affairs of Tuscan lads, the realities of their daily work, and the troubles that wind and weather bring them; and of a quite modern appreciation of the subtler beauties of landscape, of the effects of colour in earth and sky. The old poets sing of nothing but courtly people and spring. Lorenzo sings of peasants and of autumn.[1] His carnival songs show how well this prince knew how to please and entice his people; their wild Bacchic choruses were on the lips of every Florentine. But his songs were eclipsed by those of his friend Politian, whose distinguished position as a Latin poet has already been noticed. Politian was a true poet; the master of an exquisite style, formed by an artistic

Alberti, c. 1405-1472

Lorenzo de' Medici, 1448-1492

[1] See *Euphorion*, by Vernon Lee, vol. i. p. 165.

blending of a wealth of classic memories with a genuine love of nature. His themes were often trivial enough (mock tournaments, the light vows of illicit love, obsequious adulation of princely patrons); but the men of his time, to whom form was everything, matter nothing, were abundantly satisfied with the incomparable sweetness of the music to which he set them. Here are a couple of verses from one of his ballads, flung off, like most of his Italian poems, as a recreation in the midst of his classic studies:

Politian, 1454-1494

I went a-roaming, maidens, one bright day,
In a green garden in mid month of May,
Violets and lilies grew on every side
'Mid the green grass and young flowers wonderful,
Golden and white and red and azure-eyed;
Towards which I stretched my hands, eager to pull
Plenty to make my fair curls beautiful,
To crown my rippling curls with garlands gay.

I went a-roaming, maidens, one bright day,
In a green garden in mid month of May.
. . . . . .
For when the full rose quits her tender sheath,
When she is sweetest and most fair to see,
Then is the time to place her in thy wreath,
Before her beauty and her freshness flee.
Gather ye therefore roses with great glee,
Sweet girls, or ere their perfume flee away.[1]

Lorenzo was a wise ruler, and his firm hand held the quarrelsome cities in equilibrium. After his death Italy entered on a period of the wildest disorganisation. In 1494 Charles VIII. of France, aspiring to the crown of Naples, and invited by Italian princes in order to gratify

[1] Translated by J. A. Symonds.

their petty animosities, overran the country, sometimes opposed by a feeble resistance, sometimes hailed as the saviour of the nation. Lorenzo's son and successor, Piero, was expelled by the Florentines for his base betrayal of their interests to the king. Charles was soon obliged by home affairs to return to France, having accomplished nothing, but leaving behind him increased disorder and new dissensions. Other Powers followed his example, and during the next fifty years Italy was constantly trampled under foot by foreign armies, coming, as often as not, at the invitation of some Pope or Prince. Social life was no less disorganised. In the confusion, private as well as public morality became a dead letter. The election of a Borgia to the Papacy was a master-stroke of cynicism. Society was permeated with unimaginable wickedness. 'Italy,' said Lorenzo the Magnificent, 'is a sink of all the vices.' And yet this very time of corruption and disorder was the 'Golden Age' of Italian literature. Poets and novelists poured forth songs and stories, in which we look in vain for any lament for the discord by which their unhappy country was being rent in pieces. Devoid of a sense of national unity, and each trusting to the power of intrigue to save his own city, they gave themselves up to the jovial indifference, the absorption in sensuous beauty, which they had inherited from Boccaccio.

Narrative poetry is the first branch of this literature which claims our attention. There are three principal mediæval sources from which poets have drawn their stores of chivalric romance. These are the legends of *Arthur*, which have been the favourite with Northern poets; of *Amadis of Gaul*, which attracted the Spanish and Portu-

guese; while the imagination of the Italians was held by the stories of *Charlemagne* and his paladins. It was the *Chanson de Roland* or *Orlando*, one of Charlemagne's knights, which furnished material to Pulci, Boiardo, and Ariosto. Of these Boiardo was the only one who treated the legends at all in the spirit of the northern romancists. In his 'Orlando Innamorato' we find something of the mystery and glamour that surrounds the Teutonic epics—something of their high intention mingled with his own Italian joyousness. But Boiardo's poem had little influence on his generation, and was soon superseded. Pulci's light, ironic treatment was more in accord with the spirit of his time. It must be remembered that Chivalry, whence these legends arose, was never quite acclimatised in Italy, where the Feudal system, of which it was the flower, had not taken root. The salt of Italian life lay in her *bourgeoisie*, as may be seen by a glance at the parentage of the great Florentines. Neither were the Italians a fighting race. The constant warfare between city and city was waged by hired *condottieri*, who, entrenched in their complicated armour, passed from one bloodless battle-field to another. The tales of chivalry never gripped their imaginations and stirred their hearts as they have done in our country. Sir Philip Sidney 'never heard the old song of Percie and Douglas that he found not his heart stirred more than with a trumpet'; but the Italian poets took the stories from the people, turning them over and playing with them with sceptical amusement; using them merely as a groundwork for a thousand fantastic, but incomparably ingenious and artistic, embellishments. Pulci's 'Morgante Maggiore'

Boiardo, c. 1434-1494

Pulci, 1432-1484

was recited canto by canto at Lorenzo's table for the entertainment of his guests, and it was written to suit the taste of this typical Renaissance audience—critical, freethinking, quick to appreciate a classical allusion, highly sensitive to beauty of form, but not readily moved to high enthusiasms.

In Ariosto we find the same spirit united to higher poetical power. Ariosto was the pre-eminent poet of the Italian Renaissance. In him, as in Shakespeare and Rabelais, are reflected in their highest development all the characteristics of his race and time. Though possessing rare genius, he sought no subject worthy to inspire it, but was content to take up Boiardo's theme where the elder poet had dropped it. He was not a great epic or dramatic poet, like Virgil or Shakespeare; he could not, like Dante, sweep the whole gamut of human emotions; he was never whirled away in a tornado of passion like Marlowe; he was incapable of the moral earnestness of Spenser; but such perfection as he chose to aim at he fully attained. 'Art for Art's sake' was the guiding principle of this bizarre age, the one strong enthusiasm that gave it greatness. To paint pictures in words that could vie with the paintings of Raphael and Titian; to enrich a perfect outline with minute and exquisite detail, with wealth of glowing colour—this was the aim of the Renaissance poets, and here Ariosto was supreme. The 'Orlando Furioso' was published in 1515. Its lack of passion and depth prevent it from ranking among true epics; but its satire, its vivid delineation of character, no less than its sensuous charm and its perfect form, single it out as the greatest poem of the period. Ariosto was not great enough to escape the two

Ariosto, 1474-1533

vices that disfigure all the literature of his time, licentiousness and servile flattery. There were very few literary men who were not the parasites of some prince or ecclesiastical dignitary from whom they made a living either by gross adulation or by blackmail. Thus Ariosto celebrates the praises of patrons whom he hated and despised, fawning on them for gold in verses of undying beauty. Pietro Aretino usually preferred the method of blackmail.

This extraordinary man, who began life as a flunkey, and was dismissed for stealing, raised himself, by sheer force of colossal impudence, to a position whence he could levy tribute on kings and nobles, sometimes threatening them with his scurrilous pen, sometimes flattering them in terms that were themselves an insult. In him were summed up all the vices of his time. If in Ariosto's verse we see the 'enchantments of Circe,' Aretino gloats over the brute-like forms that wallow at her feet. Keeping a harem in his palace at Venice, and pouring out verses of inconceivable obscenity, he poses as the relentless denouncer of vice and the 'scourge of princes.' But the man was extraordinarily clever, unscrupulous and unconventional, and—he was the fashion. The greatest personages of his day vied with one another in showering gifts and honours upon him, in spite of his shameless and open bragging of his power of extorting such things. Noble and virtuous ladies, such as Vittoria Colonna, the friend of Michael Angelo, did not disdain to correspond with him. His works consist of comedies, burlesques, epistles, and religious romances. In style he did good service for his native tongue. Trading upon his

Aretino, 1492-1557

own ignorance, he set at defiance all the rules of the purists, whether they were slaves to the classics or to the *trecentisti*, and wrote in vigorous, homely, racy Italian. As he says, very pertinently, 'It is far better to drink out of one's own wooden cup than another's golden goblet; and a man makes a finer show in his own rags than in stolen velvets.'

Aretino's daring unconventionality gave piquancy to his writings; but the prevailing taste was in favour of a close imitation of fourteenth-century authors.

The Petrarchists

The innumerable verse writers of the time gathered themselves into academies where they minutely studied the styles of Petrarch and Boccaccio, and tried to reproduce them with the aid of lists of words and phrases used by their models. Italian poetry, which was so abundantly (too abundantly) poured out, was warped and cramped by being forced into the Petrarchistic mould; for Petrarch's age had passed away, and his chivalrous, serious temper was almost as obsolete as many of his words. The most distinguished of the *Petrarchisti* was

Bembo, 1470-1547

Bembo, author of the 'Asolani,' whose equally devoted imitation of Cicero in his Latin writings we have already noticed. This conventional elegance was aimed at even by the writers of the 'Capitoli,' a peculiarly degraded species of burlesque verse which was immensely popular. It was invented by Berni, more honourably

Berni, c. 1497-1535

known as the author of a *rifacimento* or revised version of Boiardo's 'Orlando Innamorato.'

The influence of Boccaccio was chiefly felt by the novelists, for it was from the 'Decameron' that the *novella* was derived. It is a significant mark of the shallowness

of this brilliant period that the most popular of all forms of literature should have been these collections of light brief tales. For the *novelle* did not, like the modern novel, make any demand upon the author's capacity for delineating character or constructing a plot. Short enough to be recited aloud, they are mere anecdotes of every-day incidents in middle-class lives: love-intrigues, practical jokes, misdoings of clerical hypocrites—wittily and gracefully told, enriched here and there with gems of description or an appeal to the emotions. They were thus admirably suited for a society which only asked to be amused, while they are of use to the historian as vivid little pictures of contemporary manners. The form of the 'Decameron' was usually followed. Boccaccio supposes his stories to have been told by a company of young men and maidens who had taken refuge in a garden outside Florence during the plague. This *brigata*, or band of ladies and their cavaliers, who have been thrown by some accident upon their own resources, appears in most collections—French and Spanish as well as Italian; and strange indeed are some of the stories which are put into the mouths of high-born maidens. The best known of the host of *novellieri* who thronged Italy during the first half of the sixteenth century is Bandello. The fact that he was a bishop did not deter him from penning, in pure amusement, the most scurrilous stories of immorality among bishops, priests and monks. No one minded. The moral sense was dead in Italy. No vice was too abominable to be regarded with anything but humorous tolerance.

The Novellieri

Bandello, c. 1480-1562

No department of light literature had a more widespread influence than that of *pastoral romance*. This

was a revival of the old bucolic ideal, with a chivalresque element added. Being wholly unreal, it gave full scope for the literary instinct and the pictorial imagination of the Italians. In the land of Arcadia anything might happen: shepherds discourse philosophy and marry princesses. Pan, Apollo, and Diana are as much at home as the errant knight and the distressed damsel. It was Jacopo Sannazaro who first mapped out and named this land of primitive innocence, in his delightful romance 'Arcadia' (published 1504). This book, which contains some of the most exquisite pieces of word painting even of that age, was received with enthusiasm both in and out of Italy, and passed through sixty editions before the end of the century. It consists of twelve pieces of prose, each introducing an eclogue. In England it was imitated by Sidney in his work of the same name, and it inspired Spenser's 'Shepherd's Calendar.' In France and Spain it produced many romances on the same model, the most famous of which is 'The Diana Enamorada' of Montemayor. In Italy itself it gave birth to the pastoral drama, from which, by a natural development, sprang the opera, the glory of the Italian stage.

Sannazaro, 1458-1530

But the literature of the Renaissance does not consist entirely of the picturesque, imaginative, over-sweet varieties which we have been discussing: it has also a positive, critical side; and this manifested itself in the new attention that was paid to political literature. The faculty of writing history was among the best of the gifts of the Renaissance. In the Middle Ages it had ceased to exist. The chronicles and annals of the old writers are of the most meagre and bald description, a mere record of

The historians

reigns and battles. They had no conception of the scientific method by which the historian selects and arranges his facts, looking for their inner significance, tracing effect to cause, throwing himself back into the past to make it live again, or disengaging himself from his own times to view them in perspective. It was in Florence that this faculty was first developed among moderns. The Florentines of this period had, by a constant succession of intrigues, experiments, and changes in the form of government, arrived at a condition of political self-consciousness which, combined with their critical analysing spirit, formed the necessary atmosphere for history writing. The father of Florentine history was Villani, the contemporary of Dante.

Villani

He was the first to perceive that the conditions of every-day life among a people are of more significance than the proceedings of its government; the first to give facts and statistics illustrating those conditions. He, with his brother and son, brought the chronicle down to the year 1365. But it was during the eventful period of the life of Florence that followed the expulsion of the Medici (1494-1537) that written history was produced in its perfection. The events of that interesting time are chronicled by no less than eight contemporary historians, all possessing in a greater or less degree the discriminating analytical power. Of these the most eminent were Machiavelli and Guicciardini, both of whom were historians of the highest order.

Nicholas Machiavelli was born in 1469. During the exile of the Medici from Florence he occupied the post of Secretary to the Republic. On their return in 1512, he was obliged to leave the city and return to his farm in

the country. It was during his banishment there that he wrote 'The Prince,' the book in which he lays down those principles of cold, relentless policy, of unscrupulous statecraft, which have caused his name to be a synonym for political immorality. It is significant, not only of the lack of self-respect in the author, but also of the strangely perverted idea of patriotism common at the time, that this diabolically clever manual of directions for the enslaving of his country should have been written for a peace-offering to the very despots whom he had helped to withstand, and who had sent him into exile. It is not fair to judge Machiavelli's morality without regard to the standard of his time. He merely formulated the rules of a game which had been played, with greater or less success, by many generations of princes and despots. He reduced the general practice to a science. But the book was not a success. People are sometimes more startled than pleased when the principles on which they act are too badly put before them; and Machiavelli was not received into favour. In Northern Europe, where the spirit of freedom was so much stronger, the book was met by a storm of execration.

Machiavelli, 1469-1527

As a writer of Italian prose, Machiavelli stands unrivalled. More occupied with what he has to say than the manner of saying it, he breaks away from the labyrinthine, verbose style of the followers of Boccaccio, and expresses his thoughts in simple, cultivated, pointed language.

Guicciardini, though a less brilliant literary genius, is an equally distinguished historian. In his 'Istoria d'Italia' he successfully accomplishes the difficult task of disentangling the threads of a com-

Guicciardini, 1483-1540

plicated contemporary history. His theories are even less moral than Machiavelli's.

Both these men fall into the error of regarding life from a narrow distorting point of view. A true political science must take account of all the springs of human action; they failed, clever as they were, because they ignored the good and saw only the evil. They represent an age that had lost the ideals and enthusiasms of youth; an age that was disillusioned, cynical, materialistic; which could believe in no motive save self-interest, and which was prepared to do the best it could for itself, to 'roll stones for these Signori Medici,' if one could not help to govern a free republic.

The Renaissance was now over for Italy. From the time of the treaty of Cambrai (1529) she lay prostrate, a submissive captive, under the rule of Spain. The ecclesiastical authority, terrified by the results of the new intellectual activity as they were manifesting themselves in the Reformation, set itself deliberately to stamp out what was left in Italy of original thought. This, having exhausted itself in every other direction, was now turning, with Bruno, Sarpi, and Galileo, in the direction of scientific inquiry. But the philosophers were burned, imprisoned, or otherwise silenced, and the ignoble peace that shrouded the country fell alike on thought and literature. The brilliance and freshness of Lorenzo's time, the splendour of Leo's, were succeeded by a time of apathy, artificiality, and languor, in which originality could only show itself in affectation, passion in sickly sentimentality. These are the qualities which appear in their most refined aspect in the effeminate sweetness of Guarini; the artificiality of Marino (the apostle of all the

Marinism, Euphuism, and Góngorism of the sixteenth and seventeenth centuries); and in the eclecticism which hampers the natural flow of Tasso's melancholy rapture —Tasso, the one great genius who illumined, though with so unsteady a light, the gathering gloom of that ignoble age.

Tasso, 1544-1595

Section II.—In France

The Renaissance in France, if it was marked by less spontaneity and youthful exuberance than in England, shared to the full the voluptuousness, the cultivated sensuous delight in the beautiful, which Italy communicated to the world. Here, as elsewhere, there was a passionate admiration for the ancient writers, a vivid interest in social and religious questions, a keen relish for all the business of the world, and an extraordinary faculty for expressing all this in lyric verse. The sensuousness of the French Renaissance was not that enervating, corrupting quality which spread like a canker under the fair show of Italy's golden age. Strains of that manlier, more serious temper, that wiser discrimination of true excellence, which gave strength and vitality to the English Renaissance, and helped to produce the Reformation, were woven in also among the complex elements that made up the new French culture, giving it, if not a high moral tone, at least that sense of confidence, that 'backbone,' for lack of which Italy failed. And yet in France, too, as the early enthusiasm died away, we find a note of disenchantment and regret blending itself with the passion for beauty in the poems of Joachim

Characteristics of the French Renaissance

du Bellay, and finding expression in Montaigne's cynical motto, 'Que sais-je?'

It was France that had set the tone of mediæval literature. Her brilliant, but short-lived, renascence in the twelfth and thirteenth centuries had given an impulse which sent her romances, her songs, and her philosophy into every court and university of Western Europe. But by the end of the fourteenth century this energy had spent itself, and France, like England, had to pass through a period of dulness and silence, and yet, as the event showed, of germination. Slowly and tentatively the New Learning began to take root, supplying in the recovered treasures of Greece and Rome a critical standard of excellence by which existing achievements might be tried and a way found to better things. Then, as the fifteenth century drew to a close, gleams of modern feeling appeared here and there. They showed themselves in the political sagacity of Philippe de Commines, the first of the chroniclers to deserve the name of historian: the first to leave the line-upon-line method, and to group his facts round a central idea which gives them coherence—the idea in this case being the new anti-feudal principle, which Louis XI. was carrying into effect, of a nation united under a central government; the first, again, to compare one country with another, to trace events to their causes, to observe and to generalise. It is quite a different manifestation of modern feeling that appears in Villon, the most eminent of the scapegraces, the *vauriens* of literature: Villon, who typifies the reaction from asceticism, the long-stifled voice of man's lower nature recklessly making itself heard. His life was

Philippe de Commines, 1445-1509

Villon, 1431-d. after 1460

far enough removed from asceticism. He seems to have committed almost every possible sin, and in the intervals, when he ceased from sinning, he was repenting with equal fervour. But rogue, thief, and homicide though he was, Villon possessed an extraordinary gift of song. No one has ever handled with such skill and delicacy the difficult metres he used, none of his predecessors had drawn from them such exquisite music. His principal poems were the 'Testaments,' which were written during his fits of penitence, and contain satirical directions for the disposition of his possessions, consisting chiefly of his heart, his old breeches, his mistress, and his three little children 'as naked as worms.' It is in the 'Grand Testament' that the famous 'Ballad of Fair Women' occurs, of which the last verse is appended:

> La royne blanche comme ung lys
> Qui chantait à voix de sireine;
> Berthe au grandpied, Biétrix, Allys,
> Harembourges qui tint le Mayne;
> Et Jehanne la bonne Lorraine,
> Qu' Angloys bruslerent à Rouen,
> Où sont elles, vierge souveraine?
> Mais où sont les nièges d'antan?

It is Villon's realism that separates him from the Middle Ages, as well as the personal note that sounds through all he wrote. He is the discoverer of the poetical side of misery. He does not, however, regard it with the *nonchalant* humour of modern Bohemianism. He takes all his troubles very much to heart, and when he writes his dismal 'Ballad of the Hanged'—'here we are, half-a-dozen in a row, all tied up together swinging about, and we

never sit down—Pray God absolve us all!'[1] it is not our smiles but our commiseration that he wishes to evoke.

Francis I., 1494-1547

Francis I., who had learnt from the Italians their lesson of a discerning patronage of literature as well as art, has been erroneously called the father of French learning; but the Renaissance had already acquired reality and strength before Francis came to the throne in 1515. The ground was really prepared for it by that quite *bourgeois* monarch, Louis XI., who made it the aim of his life to unite the kingdom into a coherent whole, substituting a central court for a number of practically irresponsible tyrants, and giving the people a sense of security and prosperity such as they had never known before.

It was just at this time, when material well-being was disposing the people for a higher civilisation, that the full tide of Italian influence began to be felt. In 1494 Charles VIII. led into Italy that expedition which is surely the strangest in the annals of warfare, an invading army which wandered, loitering, wondering, admiring and learning, over a country which was too hopelessly disorganised to be able to decide whether her invaders were friends to be welcomed or foes to be repelled. In the following year the French returned home, not indeed with great military glory, but with eyes that had been opened to such marvels of learning and culture and art as they had never dreamed of, while in the train of their King came artists and scholars who would help them to produce like wonders. This expedition is really the connecting link between the

[1] From Sir Walter Besant's *Early French Poetry*.

Italian Renaissance and that of the North. By it the North was introduced to Italy. At once Italian fashions and Italian ideas began to be eagerly copied, and France was attacked by the mania for style which in each country was an early symptom of the Renaissance. A school of writers appeared who cultivated a pseudo-classic style, and who are usually called the Rhétoriqueurs. Of these Chastellain was the leading spirit, and with him were associated Molinet, Crétin (whom Rabelais so unkindly ridiculed), Octavien de St. Gelais (who, worn out with debauchery, turned priest at twenty-three, and died in the odour of sanctity at thirty-six), and Jean le Maire who, when at his best, could write both poetry and prose of a very high order. These poets loaded the language with Latinisms, but they took a step backwards into the Middle Ages by allegorising in the fashion of the *Roman de la Rose*, and cultivating such artificial and fantastic forms of verse as *la rime fraternisée, la rime couronnée, la rime rétrograde*, as well as verses in the shape of ovals, triangles, and other figures. The following is a quaint example of *la rime couronnée:*

The Rhétoriqueurs

Mer blanche colombelle d'elle
Je vais souvent priant, criant,
Qui dessous la cordelle belle
Me jette un œil friand riant.

It was in verse of this school that Clement Marot was trained by his father, Jean Marot, himself a poet, and valet to Francis I. Clement is interesting to us as having to some extent influenced Spenser. His earlier poems are in Crétin's manner, but he was possessed of a vigorous individuality, and he soon broke away

Marot, 1497-1544

from restraints that were ill-suited to his genius. He was not, however, a poet of great originality. His work consists of short poems, epistles, elegies, epigrams, and a few revivals of such mediæval forms as the *blason*. His chief characteristics are elegance and grace, often combined with a delicate *naïveté*. His verses represented all the best qualities of his generation, and were immensely popular; but Marot was too reckless in his choice of subjects for the perilous days he lived in, and he was constantly in difficulties. His career is well reflected in his writings, for in all his misfortunes it was his custom to indite an epistle appealing for help to the King or some other powerful personage. His lifelong friendship with Margaret, the King's sister, was not sufficient to save him from the suspicion of heresy which his attacks on the clergy aroused, and indeed that famous literary lady and all her circle had the reputation of being either reformers or free-thinkers. However, Margaret was still strong enough to rescue her courtier more than once from the clutch of the merciless heresy-hunters. In an endeavour to prove his orthodoxy Marot translated thirty of the Psalms. His versions were received with enthusiasm; they were set to music, and were sung by everyone, from the King to the people in the streets. But unfortunately some taint of heresy was discovered in them, and they were condemned by the *Sorbonne*. Their author had to flee for his life to Geneva, where he joined the Reformers, and his psalms were sung in the Lutheran churches. After a time, however, he fell out with his new friends and returned to end his days under the protection of his old patron, Francis.

Margaret of Angoulême, 1492-1549

Margaret is, perhaps, the most famous of the many highly-cultured women who played their part in the Renaissance. She was the wise counsellor and helper of her brother Francis; she was adored by a brilliant circle of literary men; she was keenly interested in all the burning questions of the day, and a broad and tolerant advocate of reform in religion. She wrote mysteries, farces, stories and poems, the last being collected after her death and published under the pretty title 'Les Marguerites de la Marguerite des Princesses, tres illustre Royen de Navarre' (Margaret was the wife of the King of Navarre). Her most important work is the 'Heptameron,' if indeed it should be ascribed to her. It was certainly produced at her court, and probably by herself in conjunction with Des Periers and others of her literary courtiers. There had already been various French imitations of the Italian *novella*, the chief being the 'Cent Nouvelles Nouvelles' attributed to Antoine la Salle (b. 1398). Boccaccio's device is followed in the 'Heptameron,' where a party of ladies and their cavaliers are supposed to be weatherbound in the Pyrenees and to while away the time by telling stories, but this framework is more elaborate than that of the 'Decameron' and makes a tale in itself. There are seventy-two stories in the 'Heptameron,' and in this book, less *bourgeois* and less genial than its Italian prototype, the refined intellectual sensuousness of the French Renaissance finds expression.

For an example of pure Bohemian jollity we may turn to the songs of Roger de Collérye, or Roger Bontemps, as he is often called, the author of a few plays, the 'Blason

des Dames,' and many ballades, epistles, and rondeaux. He had an immense vogue in the early part of the sixteenth century. The words in which his editor (d'Héricault) sums him up give a vivid picture of literary Bohemianism at the time: 'All the followers of the "*Abbé des Fous* of Auxerre," all the "*Basochiens*,"[1] clerks of the "*Chastelet*," *Enfans sans souci*[1]; all the grand family of philosophers, shoeless and hungry, all the acolytes of the "*Mère Folle*" were his comrades; and all these fools, archfools, lunatics, heteroclytes and the rest of the legitimate offspring of Roger Bontemps recognised their idol in the joviality and joyous poverty of Roger de Collérye.'[2]

Roger de Collérye

Roger brings us by a natural transition to the central figure of the French Renaissance—the man who was to France what Shakespeare, Cervantes, and Ariosto were to England, Spain and Italy—François Rabelais. The great philosopher of laughter was born towards the close of the fifteenth century. At an early age he entered a monastery, took the full vows, and became a priest. But he and the monastic system proving mutually uncongenial he abandoned it, studied medicine and practised as a physician. He travelled much, but returned to France and held a couple of livings there before his death. He was no doubt saved from much persecution on religious grounds by the friendship of Francis. After a preliminary essay in the same style, he published the first instalment of 'Gargantua and Pantagruel' in 1535. The complete edition did not appear until 1567. It became so popular that sixty

Rabelais, 1483-1553

[1] See below, p. 144.

[2] See *Early French Poetry*, by Sir Walter Besant.

editions appeared before the close of the century. The work is primarily a burlesque of the mediæval *roman d'aventure*, but this forms a ground from which the author diverges to satirise many things that touched him more nearly than the absurdities of chivalry. The book is long and desultory; all is on a broad scale. The heroes are giants, and their actions are viewed through a distorting medium which exaggerates them into extravagant farce. But, in its strange medley of erudition, satire, buffoonery, realism, and imagination, it reflects very clearly the manners of the time. The objects against which Rabelais' satire is chiefly directed are the abuses of conventual life and the mediæval system of education; and sometimes, when his wandering pen reaches a subject such as these, on which he feels strongly, he passes from the jester to the Humanist, and advocates the new theories in simple, serious, and very cultivated prose. But of course humour of the broadest is the principal element in the work. In his mingling of realism and classic learning Rabelais represents the Pagan side of the Renaissance, but that only partially. He is naked and by no means ashamed, but he lacks the poetic sense which redeems and consecrates that nakedness. Instead of seeing it in the glamour of Greek enthusiasm, he throws on it the full light of day, and roars with laughter at it. Rabelais showed, in the character of Panurge—the man who has all the intellectual qualities but no moral sense—how well he could delineate human nature when he chose. The great flaw in his splendid genius is of course the obscenity which disfigures almost every page he wrote, and which has brought about the righteous retribution that, while his three great compeers are as highly

appreciated to-day as they ever were, 'Gargantua and Pantagruel' is almost a sealed book except to those whose studies compel them to turn over its pages. Rabelais died in 1553, nine years after Marot, thirteen years after Ariosto; Cervantes was then six years old, Montaigne seven, while there were yet eleven years to elapse before the birth of Shakespeare.

The second half of the century is dominated by a school of writers who were ready in their reforming zeal to sweep away the memory of Marot and his predecessors. Nothing is more characteristic of the growth of the Renaissance spirit of self-consciousness and criticism than the curious movement initiated by the seven writers who are known as the *Pléiade*—Ronsard, Du Bellay, Baïf, Belleau, Daurat, Jodelle, and Pontus de Tyard. These men banded themselves together with the avowed intention of reforming their native tongue, *i.e.* of remodelling it after the pattern of Greek and Latin. Their principles were put before the public in a little book by Joachim du Bellay entitled 'La Deffense et Illustration de la Langue Françoyse,' in which the author contends for the plasticity of languages, saying that 'they do not grow like trees, but are determined by the free choice of men.' The task was unique, and therefore errors were inevitable. There was no precedent for the putting of a language to school. Ronsard and his friends were perhaps too ready to discard old forms that were in accord with the national spirit, too anxious to force classical idioms upon it; much that they wrote seems to us intolerably affected and pedantic. But the fact remains that they found a language which, though far from poor in words, had rarely been used for anything

The 'Pléiade'

more subtle or abstract than a love-song or a romance, and was consequently loose, vague, and ready to degenerate into babble; which had no definite rules of syntax and orthography, and which, though capable (as Villon had proved) of exquisite sweetness of rhyme, had been weakened by the exaltation of rhyme at the expense of rhythm; and that, after fifty years of Ronsardising—for the methods of the *Pléiade* were accepted by almost all the literary men between 1550 and 1600—French had developed into a language apt for the philosopher as well as for the singer, enriched with splendid adjectives and graceful diminutives, full of colour and depth and subtlety, and which had felt its way to the Alexandrine as the indispensable medium for serious poetry.

Ronsard, 1524-1585

Ronsard was born in 1524. He began his career as a courtier, and was for some time attached to the embassies in England and Scotland; but while still quite young he was rendered deaf by an illness, and thenceforward gave himself up to literary studies. He became a most energetic student. One of the chief points in the creed of the *Pléiade* was that poetry is not merely imaginative, but needs a severe training in the best modern authors as well as in Greek and Latin. But, scholar though he was, Ronsard's intense appreciation of natural beauty saved his work from much formalism and pedantry, and his ear, exquisitely sensitive to rhythm, enabled him to take what he would of the wild sweetness of the old French poets and to blend it with the measured music of classical verse to form the strong glowing diction he used. Ronsard's first four books of 'Odes' (a new form in French poetry) were published in 1550; the 'Amours'

and another book of 'Odes' followed. His longest, but not his most successful, work was an epic entitled the 'Franciade' (published 1572); other odes, sonnets, and 'Amours' were published before his death in 1585. We append as an example one of the most famous of his sonnets:

Quand vous serez bien vieille, le soir à la chandelle,
Assise au coin du feu, devisant et filant,
Direz, chantant mes vers, et vous émerveillant,
'Ronsard me célébrait du temps que j'étais belle!'
Lors vous n'aurez servante oyant cette nouvelle,
Desjà sous le labeur à demi sommeillant,
Qui au bruit de mon nom ne s'aille réveillant,
Bénissant votre nom de louange immortelle,
Je serai sous la terre et fantôme sans os,
Par les ombres myrteux je prendrai mon repos,
Vous serez au foyer, une vieille accroupie,
Regrettant mon amour et votre fier dédain.
Vivez, si m'en croyez, n'attendez à demain.
Cueillez dès aujourd'hui les roses de la vie.

To his contemporaries, both in France and out of it, Ronsard was the 'Prince of Poets,' but, in modern estimation, Joachim du Bellay ranks little lower than his friend. In his style we find the same blending of classic harmony with natural beauty, and in addition it is strongly marked by the intense voluptuous melancholy of the Renaissance. These were qualities eminently suited for expression by the sonnet, and Du Bellay was the first and almost the best of French sonneteers. He was a passionate and vehement lover, and he sings the praises of his mistresses and records the history of his passions in the tender sonnets to Viole ('L'Olive'), and in the glowing 'Regrets' and other poems on Faustine (his Italian love),

Du Bellay, 1525-1560

several of which are in Latin. Du Bellay was not only a poet. His 'Deffense' ranks as the first important piece of sound literary criticism, and also as the book in which the wonderful force, clearness, and gracefulness of French prose were first exhibited. For pure beauty of style there is nothing in the poetry of the period which excels the limpid prose of Du Bellay, or of Amyot, the translator of Plutarch, whom Montaigne took as his master.

Du Bartas, 1544-1590

A poet who, though opposed to Ronsard by artistic rivalry and religious differences, shared fully in the aims and methods of the *Pléiade* and who had a strong influence upon his English contemporaries, was Du Bartas, called, by his French supporters, the Protestant Ronsard, and by Gabriel Harvey, the 'divine' Bartas. His best known work is 'La Première Semaine,' a poem in Alexandrines upon the first week of creation; it was followed by the 'Seconde Semaine' and other poems, all written in a manner which, if sometimes dull and pedantic, could be splendidly rich and picturesque. The 'Tragiques' of D'Aubigné, with their fine impressive rhythm, clenched the work of Du Bartas in establishing the position of the Alexandrine.

D'Aubigné, 1550-1633

At this time the affairs of France were in a condition of the wildest disorder, which threatened, when the succession was disputed, to become more desperate than ever. Society was distracted by party spirit. On the one side were Catherine de' Medici and the powerful, merciless League, on the other, Henry of Navarre, and the Calvinists, maddened by the memory of St. Bartholomew's day. The intense interest felt in the struggle is shown by the number of memoirs, which give us vivid pictures of the

Prose writers

events, as, for example, the account of the massacre written by Marguerite de Valois (a later Margaret than the author of the 'Heptameron'); the memoirs of Brantôme, of Montluc, of Sully, and the impassioned history of D'Aubigné. Neither in England nor in Italy was anything like the same attention paid to politics by literary men. In 1594 a remarkable book appeared, entitled 'La Satyre Menipeé,' the joint production of several authors who, clear-headed Frenchmen as they were, of the cool, positive, intellectual type, refused to attach themselves to either of the antagonistic parties, but stood coldly aloof, trying to get what good they might for the state from the shifting tides that ebbed and flowed. In this book each of the authors writes a burlesque speech, which is put into the mouth of some eminent political personage, such as the Bishop of Lyons, or the Duke of Mayenne, all of whom (except the seventh speaker, the representative of the 'Tiers Etat') are made to bring down ridicule upon themselves. In the last speech the subject is treated seriously, and all the evils of misgovernment from which France was suffering are denounced in clear vigorous terms.

It was to this party of *Politiques* that Montaigne belonged, a fact which harmonises with the dissatisfied, sceptical undertone that appears in his writings. The position of a 'trimmer' is not an heroic one, nor is it conducive to confidence and buoyancy. It is the last resort of the man, too clear sighted for an enthusiast, who sees the faults on both sides and realises the futility of interference. He shrugs his shoulders and lets them fight it out. This irresponsible attitude is maintained throughout the famous essays. In the preface the author announces

Montaigne, 1533-1592

that he writes neither for fame nor utility. It is evident that his pen wanders on at his own will or whim, concerning itself not at all either with the ostensible subject-matter of the essay nor with the expectation of the reader. The only thread connecting this most entertaining desultory talk is the personality of the author. The style varies between the sustained eloquence to which he sometimes rises in discussing ethical or political questions, and the easy garrulity into which he slips when, with engaging frankness, he discusses his private affairs. His essays offer a striking contrast to those of Bacon, their only point of resemblance being the quick flow of ideas which characterises both; but while in Bacon thought succeeds thought in swift, hammer-like strokes, each marked off clear, and clean, and impressive, in Montaigne's much longer essays one idea leads on to another, and the author follows the train of his thought, permitting it to lead him, while he illumines and expands it in his incomparably vivid interesting manner.

Montaigne represents the Renaissance at the ebb-tide; its high hopes and brilliant prospects were giving place to despondency, scepticism and (but not in Montaigne) pedantic formalism. He has not the melancholy of Du Bellay so much as a cynical though not bitter perception of the 'vanity of human wishes.'

Regnier, 1573-1613

This regret appears again in the satires of Regnier, who is usually considered the greatest of sixteenth century satirists. He followed the method of Horace rather than Juvenal, and far surpassed his English contemporaries, Hall and Marston, in poetic power, keenness of wit, and knowledge of human nature. He left sixteen regular satires in Alexandrine verse, and a great

RARY . MINNEAPOLIS 4, MINN.

number of satirical epigrams. In his verse, which has all the polish of the *Pléiade* without its affectation, and which is sometimes sweet and sad as well as ironical, is shewn the full power of Renaissance poetry before it fell under the withering reforms of Malherbe, Boileau, and the Academy.

Section III.—In England

Lateness of the English Renaissance

The waves of renascence that came pulsing up from Italy beat on our shores for some time before England was swept by the full flood of new influences and new ideas which were to act upon the quickened national genius, and help it in the production of the most magnificent of modern literatures. This tardiness was not so much on account of the remoteness and barbarity of the island, as because the literary movement in England was inseparably bound up with the Reformation; and the Reformation, though owing its origin to the very same impulses as the Renaissance, became, as it developed, strongly antagonistic to all the culture and the vivid interest in purely human things that were the marks of the wider movement. Erasmus, Colet, More and others laid the foundations of the New Learning in schools and colleges, and at one time there was a promise of quick development. But the religious struggle, with its storm and stress, its violent party spirit and its Smithfield fires, dealt a blow at secular culture which put it back for many years. The Universities became once more mere centres of religious controversy, and the nation was not in tune for poetry.

It was not until after the accession of Elizabeth that

people were able to lift their heads and breathe freely again. The storm was over, and, just as the birds break out into a chorus of song after a thunderstorm, so England, during the second half of the sixteenth century, 'became a nest of singing birds.' The country was entering upon a period of peace and prosperity, such as it had never known before. The Feudal System had been broken up by the Wars of the Roses, and the fires of persecution were out; the people might go fearlessly about their business or their pleasure. The burghers were daily increasing in wealth and importance —whether they drew their money from agriculture, or commerce, or from the thriving woollen industry. The old gloomy fortresses were giving place to beautiful and commodious palaces; manor houses were built instead of thatched cottages. What had been mere holes in the wall were now glass windows. In the bedchambers pillows appeared instead of wooden logs. Most of the little refinements of every-day life, which to us are bare necessities, were then introduced for the first time. Grave men shook their heads over the effeminacy of the age; but all these influences helped to make the people joyous and expansive, feeling the strength of their own individuality and ready to give it expression. An outburst of national gaiety followed, showing itself in festivals, mummeries, and pageants, in May-day games, and also in the general license, horse-play, and drunkenness, which helped to bring about the Puritan reaction. Among the nobles and gentlemen of the Court the same feeling found expression in the new poetry. The most brilliant period of our literature was not reached until the last decade of the

England under Elizabeth

century, when the Spaniards had been finally beaten back, and England, under the strong, cunning hand of the Maiden Queen, had once for all taken its place in the front rank of the nations of Europe. It was during these years that most of the best work of the great Elizabethans was published; but this noonday splendour was ushered in by many writers whose works are full of the brightness and promise of morning.

They drew their inspiration, of course, from Italy.

The influence of Italy

'In the latter end of the same King (Henry VIII.)'s reigne, sprong up a new company of courtly makers, of whom Sir Thomas Wyatt th' elder and Henry Earle of Surrey were the two chieftaines, who having travailed into Italy and there tasted the sweete and stately measures and stile of the Italian Poesie, as novices newly crept out of the schooles of Dante, Arioste and Petrarch, they greatly polished our rude and homely manner of vulgar Poesie from that it had been before, and for that cause may justlie be sayd the first reformers of our English meetre and stile.'[1]

These words give us the connecting link between the mature Italian and the young English culture. Italy, as we have seen, was too exhausted, politically and socially, to make the best use of the unparalleled wealth of material for a great literature which she possessed at the beginning of the sixteenth century. Other nations were to reap where she had sown, England most abundantly, though last. Here was a nation which had but lately emerged from barbarism, full of fresh untried vigour—

[1] Puttenham: *The Art of English Poesie;* Arber's edition, Bk. I., ch. 31.

full of a boyish eagerness for adventure. This brimming energy, which showed itself in a thousand fantastic ways, only needed an impulse in the right direction to produce monumental work, and this impulse was given by contact with the Italians. Wyatt and Surrey were not the only young Englishmen who travelled southwards in those days. In Elizabeth's reign imitation of the Italians, in their dress, their speech, their ways, became a mania.[1] It was said that 'men made more account of a story out of Boccaccio than a story out of the Bible.' A continental tour began to be considered a necessary part of a young man's education, and few came home the better for their plunge into the luxurious, refined, corrupt society of Rome or Venice. It was a severe test for raw undisciplined tempers, accustomed to the rude simplicity of English manners. Englishmen had not the Italian art of playing gracefully with vice. They flung themselves into it with the headlong energy that characterised them, and became worse than their teachers. 'An Italianate Englishman,' said the Italians themselves, 'is an incarnate devil.'

No one was more alive to this pernicious influence, which he calls the 'enchantment of Circe,' than Roger Ascham, the fine old scholar who was tutor to the Queen, and the first writer of any distinction to employ English prose. In his 'Schoolmaster,' treating of travel as a part of education, he advises those who go to Italy 'to look to the life of the wisest traveller that ever travelled thither, set out by the wisest writer that ever

Ascham, 1515-1568

[1] Green: *Short History of the English People.* Part III., p. 399.

spake with tongue, God's doctrine only excepted, and that is Ulysses in Homer.' The same warning note is uttered by John Lyly in his 'Euphues.' Their fears were well grounded; but we who look back and see how all our magnificent Elizabethan literature, sturdily English though it remained, was determined by that of Italy, cannot regret the contact that made this possible. All the literary material that was taken from Italy was so transformed as to accord with the English genius —generally by a process of expansion in which the outline may become blurred and the sharp delicate detail may be lost; but the form is invested with a vague grandeur which, though sometimes grotesque, always commands our admiration. The same store of chivalric legends which draws out the delicate wit of Ariosto, inspires the sublime earnestness of Spenser. The Italian *novelle*, slight, pretty, amusing, furnish material for the terrible majestic drama of the English stage. Instead of Aretino, foul to the core, battening on infamous gains, we have poor wild Greene, his own worst enemy, dying in his wretched attic of disease and dissipation—a man who had led an evil life, but from some dim perception of the sanctity of Art, had kept his pen pure. Instead of the mannerisms of Bembo and the Petrarchists of the academies, we have, in 'Astrophel and Stella,' sonnets which, while exquisite in form, convey, rightly or wrongly, the conviction that they are the unfettered expression of sincere devotion. The English never went to the same length as the Italians in the cultivation of pure style. Not that they were insensible to the charm of picturesque language. They were true

The relation between Italian and English Literature

children of the Renaissance in their worship of beauty in all its forms. They, like other nations when first awakening to a perception of style, passed through the stage when its importance is exaggerated, and men try to outvie one another in ingenious use of language. But the English were not only less dominated by the pictorial sense than the Italians; they had so much to say, and felt so strongly about it all, that words could never become for them the plastic things they were to the Italian followers of Boccaccio and Petrarch.

It is in the matter of style that Wyatt and Surrey, the forerunners of Renaissance poetry, are epoch-making. Neither of them was a man of great originality or power. But they were the first English poets to study the laws of prosody, to polish their verses, to choose for themselves models which they translated and imitated until they caught the very spirit of their masters. To estimate their work we must compare them, not with those who followed in and obliterated their footsteps, but with their predecessors. The last poet of any consideration before them was Skelton, whose wild, uncouth doggerel forms an admirable foil to the dignity and restraint which they introduced. Skelton thus apologises in his prologue:

Wyatt, 1503-1542

Surrey, 1517-1547

> Though my rime be ragged,
> Tattered and jagged,
> Rudely raine-beaten
> Rusty and moth-eaten;
> If ye take wel therewith,
> It hath in it some pith.

Against this we may place one of Surrey's best known sonnets, the epitaph on his friend Clere:

Norfolk sprung thee, Lambeth holds thee dead;
Clere, of the count of Cleremont, thou hight;
Within the womb of Ormond's race thou bred,
And sawest thy cousin [1] crowned in thy sight.
Shelton for love, Surrey for lord thou chase,[2]
(Aye me! whilst life did last that league was tender)
Tracing whose steps thou sawest Kelsall blaze,
Landrecy burnt, and battered Boulogne render.
At Montreuil gates, hopeless of all recure,
Thine Earl, half dead, gave in thy hand his will,
Which cause did thee this pining death procure
Ere summers four times seven thou could'st fulfil.
Ah Clere! if love had booted care or cost,
Heaven had not won nor earth so timely lost.

Perhaps the greatest achievement of Wyatt and Surrey was their introduction into England of the sonnet, the purest, most difficult, and most restrained form of lyric verse. But to Surrey we also owe blank verse, which he employed in his translation of two books of the Æneid. This metre was a new fashion, even in Italy; but it soon showed its accordance with the spirit of English poetry by becoming the recognised medium for epic and dramatic poetry. Of the two poets Wyatt excelled in satire, but Surrey has more of the grace and sweetness of his master Petrarch, whose example he followed in a series of sonnets addressed to his lady, 'Geraldine,' a fair child of thirteen. Mediæval poetry had dealt very little with individual emotions; we meet with nothing more personal in the allegorical romances than 'Dangier,' 'Belamour,' 'Faux-Semblant,' and the like—mere abstractions; but from this time forward English poetry is dominated by the intimate personal note that Petrarch sounded. Wyatt and Surrey

[1] Anne Boleyn. [2] didst choose.

also practised several of the forms of verse that were fashionable in France at this time, such as the *ballade*, the *complainte*, the *rondeau*, the *tenson*. Their poems were first published in 'Tottel's Miscellany' (1547), but they must for some time before have been handed about, as the custom was, among the ladies and gentlemen of the Court. Both these poets, like so many others in those turbulent days, were cut off in the prime of life. Sir Thomas Wyatt was tall, handsome, well versed in chivalric arts and exercises, could speak most European languages, and was a reformer and a student. Surrey had more of the exuberant animal spirits of the time; so much so, that at the age of twenty-five he was put in the Tower for rioting about the city at night and throwing stones at the citizens' windows.

We hear little of the 'Courtly Wits' or 'Company of Courtly Makers' during the reigns of Edward and Mary, but they come to the fore again at the accession of Elizabeth—men of birth and position, statesmen, soldiers, courtiers; men like Gascoigne, Sidney, Spenser, Raleigh, who gathered about the Queen and added to the lustre of her throne. Elizabeth herself is a typical child of the Renaissance, especially in its Italian aspect. Gay, witty, passionate, pleasure-loving; an excellent classical scholar, deeply interested in the new literature, throwing herself with equal zest into a European intrigue or a private flirtation, serenely indifferent to religious questions—she is much more akin to Lorenzo the Magnificent than to her English contemporaries. With all her Tudor love for pomp and pageantry, she had the interests of her country at heart, and her people worshipped her.

Elizabeth, 1533-1603

The poets soon learned the lessons of style, and gathered themselves into little literary coteries, Italian fashion, exchanging sonnets, and opinions upon the reformation of English poetry. England differed from Italy in having but one centre, London, where, among the nobles at the Court, or the lawyers at the Inns of Court, genius and literary taste could find a congenial atmosphere. Thus it was the aristocracy, not, as in Italy, the middle-class, who initiated the literary revival, and all the work of the early Elizabethans has the same courtly tone.

Two features are noticeable at the beginning of the reign: the great outpouring of lyric verse and the enthusiasm for translating the classics[1]; an enthusiasm which, in the ordinary course of development, would have followed closely on the Revival of Learning. Many of the songs were collected and published in miscellanies, such as Tottel's (1557); 'The Paradise of Daynty Devises' (1576); 'A Gorgious Gallery of Gallant Inventions' (1578); 'A Handefulle of Pleasant Delites' (1584), and 'England's Helicon' (1600). The lyrics follow French and Italian models, for the most part, but they are far from being mere imitations. Conventional they are, and sometimes commonplace; but, in the later editions especially, they are animated and sparkling, and full of vigour and grace. The following verses will serve to show the strange medley of ideas which composed the rich heritage of these singers. In the seventh line, for example, we find side by side a classical, a mediæval, and an Italian term:

The Miscellanies

[1] *E.g.* Jasper Heywood's translations from *Seneca;* Thomas Phaer's, from *Virgil;* Golding's, from *Ovid.*

Phillida: When my Corydon sits on a hill
Making melody:
Corydon: When my lovely one goes to her wheel
Singing cheerily:
Phil.: Sure methinks my true love doth excell
For sweetness, for sweetness
Our Pan, that old Arcadian knight.
Cor.: And methinks my true love bears the bell
For clearness, for clearness
Beyond the nymphs that be so bright.

Phil.: Had my Corydon, my Corydon
Been (alack) her swain:
Cor.: Had my lovely one, my lovely one
Been in Ida plain:
Phil.: Cynthia Endymion had refused
Preferring, preferring
My Corydon to play withal.
Cor.: The Queen of Love had been excused
Bequeathing, bequeathing
My Phillida the golden ball.

There are but two poems of any importance during the early Elizabethan period: 'The Steele Glasse,' of Gascoigne, and the 'Mirror for Magistrates,' of Sackville. Their authors are better known as two of our earliest dramatists; keen students of the classics, both of them, and translators. In the 'Induction' to the 'Mirror for Magistrates' (a collection of 'tragical pieces,' after the style of Boccaccio's 'Falls of Illustrious Men,' and Lydgate's 'Falls of Princes') we see how, from his classical studies, Sackville had learnt restraint and stateliness. The solemn rise and fall of his stanzas conveys an impression of impending doom in a manner not approached by any of his predecessors. The 'Steele Glasse' is

Gascoigne, 1536?-1577

Sackville, 1536-1608

almost the first of our regular satires, and shews a great advance on Skelton's headlong style. George Gascoigne was an 'Inns of Court man': witty, polished, and adventurous. When he died, in 1577, Spenser was twenty-five, Sidney twenty-three, and Shakespeare thirteen. Thus the great literary period was just opening.

In considering the extraordinary fertility and variety of later Elizabethan literature, we have to remember that it was able to reap the benefit of the work already accomplished in Italy and France, and to some extent in Spain. Not only were Petrarch and Boccaccio, Marot and Rabelais, familiar to our writers, but Ariosto, Cervantes, Ronsard, Du Bellay, Du Bartas, and even post-Renaissance writers, such as Tasso and Marini, contributed something to swell England's triumph.

If we seek a representative of the English Renaissance at its best, we can hardly find a truer one than Sir Philip Sidney. In him, at any rate, the men of his own time hailed the incarnation of all their ideals—the Greek ideal of beauty in body and mind—*καλὸς κἀγαθός*; the chivalric ideal of the perfect knight *sans peur et sans reproche*, and the Humanistic ideal of the man of wit and refinement, a scholar and a poet. There never was a man more idolised by his generation, and yet he was not a great noble, nor the holder of a powerful position, nor did he perform any remarkable achievement. He seems to have possessed that rare, all-compelling gift which evades definition, but which we call 'charm.' And, indeed, his was an eminently loveable nature. He was loved for his buoyancy, for his generous courtesy, for the sweet grave dignity which marked him even as a boy, for his manly strength

Sidney, 1554-1586

and beauty, and for his loyal love for his friends. All England was shaken with grief when the news came of his untimely death (for he was not thirty-two when he refused the cup of water on the field of Zutphen). The literary works which he left are not of an importance commensurate with his fame; but this is well accounted for, not only by his early death, but by the fact that Sidney was a statesman, and a man of action rather than of letters. At an age when most men are but emerging from raw youth, he was sent on delicate embassies, and was pronounced by William of Orange to be 'one of the ripest and greatest councillors of estate that at that day lived in Europe.' His literary work (except the 'Apologie') was undertaken merely as a relaxation, to express his own feelings and to entertain his friends, with little thought of publication. His first book, the 'Arcadia,' a pastoral romance, was dedicated to his sister, the Countess of Pembroke. He says of it: 'It is but a trifle. My young head must be delivered'; and delivered it was, of a strange medley of fantastic ideas.

English Prose

English prose was as yet hardly formed. Ascham, in his first book 'Toxophilus,' a treatise on archery, had found it necessary, like the earliest Italian prose writers, to apologise for using the vulgar tongue, quoting the dictum of Aristotle that 'it is best to speak as the common people do, and to think as wise men do.' But he confesses that he would have found it easier to write in Latin, and his English, like that of other scholars of his day, is classical in its idiom, and reads like a translation from the Latin. Neither Ascham nor his successors, Hooker and Bacon, conceived that they were helping in

the development of a literary English with a character and style of its own. They regarded the vernacular as a mere makeshift, to be forced as closely into the classical mould as possible. However, the sobriety and clearness which this conception forced upon the language formed a desirable counterfoil to the extravagance of the Euphuists.

The style of the 'Arcadia' is far more free and decorative than the early prose; in fact it abounds in the conceits and extravagances of the school of conventional pastoral to which it belongs. As a specimen of its diction may be taken the following description of Pamela sewing:

'For the flowers she had wrought carried such life in them, that the cunningest painter might have learned of her needle, which with so pretty a manner made his careers to and fro through the cloth, as if the needle itself would have been loth to have gone fromward such a mistress but that it hoped to return thitherward very quickly again; the cloth looking with many eyes upon her and lovingly embracing the wounds she gave it; the shears also were at hand, to behead the silk that was grown too short. And if at any time she put her mouth to bite it off, it seemed that where she had been long in making of a rose with her hands, she would in an instant make roses with her lips; as the lilies seemed to have their whiteness rather of the hand that made them than of the matter whereof they were made, and that they grew there by the suns of her eyes and were refreshed by the most comfortable air which an unawares sigh might bestow upon them.'

Most of the poems with which the Arcadia is interspersed are mere experiments in carrying out the pseudo-classical views of Sidney's little coterie. The pedantic

Gabriel Harvey (whose well-meant endeavours to dissuade Spenser from wasting time over the 'Faerie Queene' will not soon be forgotten) was especially ardent as a reformer of English verse. His idea of language was that it should be 'rare, quaint, and odd in every point, and, as a man would say, a degree or two above the reach of a common scholar's capacity.' Both Sidney and Spenser had the good taste to see, after many experiments, that elegiacs, hexameters, and sapphics, are wholly unsuited to English verse. In Sidney's other prose work, the 'Apologie for Poetrie' (1581), the youthful extravagances of the 'Arcadia' are left behind, and the style is admirable in its pliant and yet persuasive strength. Sidney includes under 'poetry' all literature which is imaginative and which delights and instructs the reader, thus comprehending many works of history and philosophy; a theory which is quite contrary to modern canons of criticism. But it is a noble defence, and contains many rich passages of glowing eloquence.

Gabriel Harvey, c. 1545-1630

Sidney's undying fame rests rather on his poetry than his prose. In the exquisite series of poems entitled 'Astrophel and Stella,' he breaks away from all artificial and unnatural metrical restraints and contents himself with the sober discipline of the sonnet to express his passionate and hopeless love for the woman whom he loved too late to make her his wife. Petrarch is his master and model, but he is no slavish imitator. He laughs at the folly of those

> That poor Petrarch's long deceasèd woes
> With new-born sighs and denizened wits do sing.

But his vigorous individuality may be better illustrated from the first of the sonnets:—

Loving in truth and fain in verse my love to shew,
That she, dear she, might take some pleasure of my pain—
Pleasure might cause her read, reading might make her know,
Knowledge might pity win, and pity grace obtain—
I sought fit words to paint the blackest face of woe;
Studying inventions fine her wits to entertain,
Oft turning others' leaves to see if thence would flow
Some fresh and fruitful showers upon my sunburn'd brain.
But words came halting forth, wanting Invention's stay,
Invention, Nature's child, fled step-dame Study's blows;
And others' feet still seem'd but strangers in my way.
Thus, great with child to speak, and helpless in my throes,
Biting my truant pen, beating myself for spite;
Fool, said my Muse to me, look in thy heart and write.

It was not possible for a poet of Sidney's time and temperament wholly to avoid 'conceits'—plays on words and forced antitheses—that jar upon us as a false note in some of his finest passages. Such devices were part of the every-day speech of the people for whom he wrote. Their minds and hearts were so overflowing with all the wonder of the Renaissance that a new language had to be invented to express it, just as ordinary clothes were thrown aside for the gayest profusion and extravagance in dress. The quaint jargon that was bandied about among the wits and ladies of the Court was modelled on the Italian prose of the *novellieri*, which, it will be remembered, was an exaggeration of Boccaccio's most verbose style. It, like the dress, only showed how keenly alive these people were to beauty, and to all the new sources of knowledge which were being opened out to them; for they ransacked heaven and earth, and all the literature that was known to them, for their odd similes and far-fetched allusions, and they turned and twisted and played with letters

Euphuism

and words and phrases like 'one whom the music of his own vain tongue doth ravish like enchanting harmony.' The new speech took its name from the book in which it first took shape, but John Lyly by no means intended 'Euphues,' or its sequel 'Euphues and his England,' as a mere book of conceits. They were inspired both as to name and substance by Ascham's 'Schoolmaster.' 'Euphues' is the first element in the character of the perfect scholar quoted by Ascham from Plato, and signifies a healthy and harmonious body and mind. They are grave books, dealing with the training of youth, and the dangers of infidelity and dissipation; but they are chiefly remembered now as setting the standard of the quaint ingenuity of diction that became all the rage and infected more or less most of the contemporary literature. The Queen took it up, and 'that beauty in Court that could not parley Euphuism was as little regarded as she that now there speaks not French,' says a writer of Charles I.'s time. Euphuism was somewhat influenced by its Spanish counterpart, the *stilo culto* of Góngora, and of Guevara, one of whose works was put into English by Sir Thomas North.

Lyly, 1554-1606

Sidney, like his Italian compeers, was not only a poet, but a patron of men of letters. His two greatest friends, the two whom he celebrates in the verses beginning:

> My two and I be met,
> A blessed happy trinity,
> As three most jointly set
> In firmest bonds of unity,

were Fulke Greville (Lord Brooke) and Edward Dyer. Of these the latter is best known by the one famous

line, 'My mind to me a kingdom is'; but Fulke Greville was widely read in the New Learning, and a man of real poetic power. His unfortunate choice of subjects, such as 'Commerce,' 'Crown Revenue,' 'Laws,' etc., was enough to rob his verse of melody; but among his plays and shorter pieces there occur many passages of singular strength and beauty, and the passionate lament for Sidney, which is ascribed to him, is one of the most mournful and touching of elegies.

Edward Dyer, 1550 ?-1607

Fulke Greville, 1554-1628

It was through Gabriel Harvey that Sidney became acquainted with Spenser, who spent a considerable time at his patron's beautiful home at Penshurst. It was there that he planned the 'Shepherd's Calendar,' which he dedicated to Sir Philip in 1579. The publication of the 'Shepherd's Calendar' makes an epoch in the history of English literature. It was the first attempt, since Chaucer, at poetry which aspired to anything above the light easy forms of amorous or satiric verse. It was received with acclamation, and Spenser was hailed as the 'new poet.' But ten years later the 'Shepherd's Calendar' was eclipsed by the publication of the first three books of England's first epic, 'The Faerie Queene.' The story of Spenser's somewhat joyless life and its unhappy close is known to everyone. Life was not easy in those days for a poet who was not a man of means. The reading public was very small. There was not the large sale of books with the quick returns of to-day, and a man might be hailed as a great poet, and be praised to his heart's content, and yet obtain very little substantial reward for his work. Spenser felt keenly the degradation that

Edmund Spenser, 1552-1598

genius had to endure in cooling its heels about a Court, always hoping and always being disappointed:

> Full little knowest thou that hast not tried
> What hell it is in suing long to bide,
> To speed to-day, to be put back to-morrow,
> To feed on hope, to pine with fear and sorrow,
> To have thy prince's grace, yet want her peers',
> To have thy asking, yet wait many years.

Probably the happiest years of his life were the two he spent at Penshurst, talking and dreaming under the trees with all the courtly young wits of the day. They were all poets, all full of the spirit of the Renaissance, all ardent students of the classics, and well read in French and Italian; but Spenser was destined to outshine them all. In later years he was often visited at his home at Kilcolman by that brilliant, vivid, versatile spirit, Sir Walter Raleigh, who shoots hither and thither like a dazzling comet among the stars of Elizabeth's Court, appearing now as a gentleman adventurer, now as a poet, now a scholar, now a courtier, now an idealist full of great enthusiasms. Sir Walter laughed at his friend for his idleness, and Spenser, though by no means idle, was indeed of a far more tranquil spirit than most of his contemporaries. It is strange how little of the lawlessness and extravagance of the English Renaissance appears in its two greatest exponents—Shakespeare and Spenser. Only the loftier, purer elements composing that motley age were represented in the poet who created Una and the Red Cross Knight. The love he sings is different altogether from love as Ariosto conceived it, 'for,' he says:

Sir Walter Raleigh, 1552-1618

> Love is lord of Truth and Loyaltie,
> Lifting himself out of the lowly dust

On golden plumes up to the purest skie,
Above the reach of loathly sinful lust,
Whose base affect, through cowardly distrust
Of his weake wings, dare not to heaven fly,
But like a mold-warpe in the earthe doth ly.

Individuality is the keynote of the Renaissance. Some, as we have seen, were assisted in realising their individuality by putting themselves in touch with the great intellects of the past; some by the help of the new arts and inventions, and discoveries which were opening up fresh fields for human enterprise. Others, and especially in England, were helped by the new Protestant view of life, according to which each man stands alone before God, is responsible for his own soul, and alone has to fight his way to holiness. This is the fundamental truth which is at the base of all that Milton wrote, and it is this continual battle of the individual Christian soul that Spenser portrays in the adventures of his knights. Spenser, however, was a son of the Renaissance first, a Protestant afterwards. Both he and Sidney were influenced more than they knew by the Platonism of the Humanists. Their imaginations were steeped in the glory and beauty of Greek mythology; they could not wrest their minds to the narrow harsh view of religion held by the Puritans. Both these great Elizabethans were staunch supporters of the Reformation, and loathed the vices of Rome; but Sidney could take delight in getting up a gorgeous pageant to entertain his Queen, and Spenser's poems are instinct with the warmth and colour, and the bewildering Pagan beauty that the later Puritans abhorred.

The allegorical groundwork of the 'Faerie Queene' was

quite in accordance with the feeling of the time, which had not yet learned that a work of art may stand unsupported by a moral. The allegory constantly changes, being sometimes merely ethical, sometimes political, sometimes religious, sometimes personal. But the poem is in no need of ingenious interpretations to support its charm, though no doubt the underlying allegory gives it backbone, and saves it from the unreality and cloying sweetness of the Italian pastoral. It is a dream-poem, a poem which translates us at once into a world of mystery and magic; but it towers above Ariosto's epic by virtue of its intense earnestness and the moral sublimity to which it sometimes rises. The essential quality of the poem lies in its music: in the incomparable skill and delicacy of handling, the nice ear, which takes so many diverse strains and weaves them, by means of the wonderful stanza that Spenser invented, into a perfectly harmonious whole. Spenser, more than any other Elizabethan, had the Italian gift of looking at the world with a painter's eye. The whole of the 'Faerie Queene,' and the exquisite 'Epithalamion,' are steeped in glowing colour and enriched with marvellously delicate detail. And yet Spenser is the only Renaissance poet who entered with simple seriousness into the spirit of the chivalric romance, neither dallying with it nor ridiculing it, but inspired by its elements of beauty and greatness. His wonderfully vivid imaginative power enabled him to bring together mediæval knights and ladies, Olympian gods and goddesses, and all the woodland troop of satyrs and nymphs, mingling, without the least discord or incongruity, with his allegorical personages and working out his scheme of Christian morality.

Spenser followed the fashion in writing a set of sonnets which he called 'Amoretti.' All the poets were writing sonnets—Shakespeare, Sidney, Drummond, Watson, Drayton, and a host of others—most of whose works were published during the last decade of the century. From among the jewels of purest poetry so produced we may select the following, which is one of the finest love-sonnets in our language. Its authorship is uncertain; it has usually been ascribed to Michael Drayton, but many believe it to be Shakespeare's:

The sonneteers

> Since there's no help, come, let us kiss and part!
> Nay, I have done. You get no more from me.
> And I am glad, yea, glad with all my heart
> That thus so cleanly I myself can free.
> Shake hands for ever, cancel all our vows,
> And, when we meet again at any time,
> Be it not seen in either of our brows
> That we one jot of former love retain.
> Now at the last gasp of Love's latest breath
> When, his pulse failing, Passion sleepless lies;
> When Faith is kneeling by his bed of death
> And Innocence is closing up his eyes:
> Now, if thou would'st, when all have given him over
> From death to life thou might'st him yet recover.

Shakespeare's 'Venus and Adonis,' and the 'Rape of Lucrece,' belong to another class—the voluptuous Italianate poetry, which is best represented by Marlowe's 'Hero and Leander.' In this marvellous fragment we are given a glimpse into the world of frank, joyous Paganism into which Boccaccio led the men of the Renaissance. In that world the splendid irregular genius of Marlowe was at home. In this poem it seems

Marlowe, 1564-1593

as if he were carried away by vision upon vision of loveliness, until he abandons himself altogether to the spell of sheer beauty. It was a strange freak that led Chapman to write a sequel to 'Hero and Leander'—Chapman the rugged, the pedantic, the passionless; though it must be confessed that he acquitted himself better than one would expect. His poem contains at least one line of perfect beauty:

Chapman, 1557?-1634

> His most kind sister all his secrets knew,
> *And to her, singing like a shower, he flew.*

The great achievement of this poet, the work which, he says, he was born to do, was the translation of the 'Iliad' and the 'Odyssey.' Chapman's theory of translation differs from that of our day. He makes no effort to bring back the atmosphere of the original, but transforms the whole work into thorough-going Elizabethan, which, with its conceits and pedantry, is in strange contrast to the purity and clearness of the Greek. His work, however, will always hold its place as one of the greatest of the modern versions of Homer. It possesses one great quality which redeems many imperfections: it is Homeric. Chapman flung himself heart and soul into the spirit of the poem, and he makes us feel it in a way which would perhaps be impossible for any poet of a less strenuous and heroic generation.

The last twenty years of Elizabeth's reign are the golden age of English poetry. Nothing is more remarkable than the number of writers who possessed a real gift of song. It is true that Spenser, Sidney and Shakespeare afforded models that would inevitably

Lyric Poetry

have raised the general standard of the work produced; but in this literature we find something more than the grace and facility which may easily be obtained from following good models. We constantly find flashes of the finest poetry, glowing from the fire of genuine inspiration, appearing sometimes where we should least have looked for them. Dramatists and pamphleteers suddenly break into exquisite snatches of song, like Lyly's 'Campaspe'; Greene's 'Samela'; Lodge's 'Love in my Bosom like a Bee'; Dekker's 'Sweet Content.' Harsh Ben Jonson melts into the pure lyric sweetness of the 'Triumph of Charis.' When the busy, restless spirit of Raleigh is caught and caged in the Tower, it solaces itself with the verses, so brave and sad, which he made almost in sight of the block. This poetic glow suffuses all the age, and is reflected in the prose, which often in its gracious dignity comes as near to the highest poetry as true prose may.

Meanwhile the spirit of criticism was awaking: the spirit which gives birth to historians and philosophers. Other inquiries into the science and method of poetry follow Sidney's 'Apologie'; the chronicles begin to take a less primitive form. Archbishop Parker, inspired by a noble desire to prove the continuity of his Church, is the first to make a systematic search for, and a systematic use of, the materials of history. John Stow, a poor tailor, and an enthusiastic patriot, travels up and down the country on a similar quest. Holinshed, from whom Shakespeare got most of his history, produced his Chronicle in 1577. Stubbes and others, lashing the follies and vices of the time, foreshow the Puritan reaction.

History

Fierce literary battles are waged, and the air is thick with pamphlets hurled at one another by men of different religious or political opinions, such as Nash and Harvey, and the host of writers in the Martin Marprelate controversy. The pamphlets are not all controversial, some are on the model of the Italian *novella*, some romantic and euphuistic, some satirical, affording vivid glimpses of contemporary life and manners, some didactic. All the young wits are writing them—Greene, Nash, Dekker, Lodge, Breton. 'In a night or a day,' says Greene, 'would I have yarked up a pamphlet, as well as in seven years, and glad was that printer that might be blest to pay me dear for the very dregs of my wit.' In strong contrast to this ephemeral, but very entertaining, literature stands the monumental prose of Bacon.

The Pamphleteers

Francis Bacon was born in 1561. He rose, after many disappointments and much ignoble intrigue, to the highest position open to him, and fell thence into lamentable disgrace. His personality is strangely contradictory. His spirit was most lofty. He was devoted heart and soul to knowledge, both from a pure love of it for its own sake and from a real desire to apply it to the needs of mankind. Knowledge shone like a beacon unceasingly before him, leading him on through all the anxieties and troubles of his life. And yet his external life seems to have been full of the meanest shifts and the most miserable disloyalties. Probably, had he been less gifted intellectually, he would have left a more respectable record. He was so enwrapt in the contemplation of his divinity, Knowledge, so concerned with his

Bacon, 1561-1626

wide philanthropy, that he had no time to think about his duty to his immediate neighbours.

The question of Bacon's scientific achievement does not here concern us. He takes his place in English literature from two of his smallest works, the least important in his own eyes: the 'Essays' and the 'Advancement of Learning.' He had no opinion of the English tongue, but regarded it with mistrust (saying it would 'play the bankrupt with books'), and made haste to have his works translated into Latin lest they should perish. And yet, in Bacon's luminous, weighty English, the language reached a point of excellence that it has rarely attained. This superiority is the more striking because it was quite unsought. He had much to say, and the paramount necessity with him was to say it clearly and unmistakably. There was never a mind so brimming with ideas; they followed one another far too quickly to be expressed in the involved periphrastic style of his contemporaries. In the 'Essays' especially there is no attempt at decoration. Many of them seem to consist of mere jottings, notes intended for future elaboration; but they are not rough or vague notes. All his ideas have been thoroughly thought out, and are laid down in clear, concise, pregnant sentences. Sometimes, when he wishes to persuade, as in the 'Advancement,' he varies his method and elaborates the idea, expanding and illustrating it in passages of rare eloquence and majesty. But he is no logic-chopper. He does not argue or prove; he merely states. As it has been said, '*Cogitata et Visa*,' the title of one of his works, might well be the title of all. In that work each paragraph characteristically begins with the impressive

Franciscus Bacon sic cogitavit, and ends with *itaque visum est ei.*

Other men might be doing the practical work of science, making the discoveries while Bacon was talking about the method; but Bacon is pre-eminently the man of the Renaissance—the man who consciously opposed himself to the whole scheme of the old method of learning, and who saw, dimly and mistily—in a dream that loomed too large to be wholly mastered—the new domain of knowledge which was to be man's heritage. He belongs to the Renaissance by the wideness of his grasp—he 'took all knowledge to be his province'; he belongs to it in his Humanism—his ardent desire to ameliorate the condition of humanity by a better and more natural method of inquiry. It is true that he rejected the theories of Copernicus, that he despised mathematics, and was astonishingly uninterested in the practical discoveries that were being made on every side; but to kindle the imaginative men of his time it needed the fire, the visionariness, the enthusiasm, the impressiveness of Bacon's great style, rather than the dry small facts of the men who were examining the blood-vessels of frogs, and registering the movements of the stars.

Section IV.—In Spain.

At the end of the fifteenth century Spain was just entering upon her brief period of power and glory. After many centuries of struggle, the power of the Moors was, in 1492, finally broken by the conquest of Granada, and, under the rule of Ferdinand and Isabella, Spain at last became a united kingdom. Thencefor-

Spain's Golden Age

ward she rapidly advanced in wealth and honour, until she became the foremost of the western nations. The accession of Charles V. with his Hapsburg possessions, and the death of Maximilian, united a vast amount of new territory under the Crown, and if, during the reign of Charles, Spain seemed to be but a province in a vast empire, the division at his death and the accession of Philip secured her supremacy. The voyages of Columbus, Cortes, Pizarro, and other bold adventurers, made her queen of the western seas, which yielded up to her their boundless stores of wealth. But her ambition was insatiable. Not content with Portugal and the Netherlands, England was to own her sway, and all the New World was to be hers. The tragic story of her collapse stands ever to point a moral to other nations. How her religious intolerance, begotten of her long struggles with the infidel, crushed out all that was freshest and noblest in her midst, and caused the Netherlands to break away, at terrible cost to themselves and loss to her; how her headstrong expulsion, first of Jews and then of the conquered Moors, drove away all the sober trading and agricultural members of the community, and left the land to a race which was too proud and too indolent to work upon it; how the autocratic policy of ambitious monarchs, keeping a large standing army and grinding the faces of the people for supplies for their foreign conquests, stirred up a rebellious spirit among the communes; how a false conception of wealth caused money to be worshipped until the country was glutted with the gold poured in from the Spanish Main; how she sank under this burden, and how England beat her back and buffeted her on the high seas, took the treasures from her galleons,

Causes of her Fall

defied her pretensions in the New World, nay, sent her buccaneers to sail up her rivers and 'singe the King of Spain's beard'—all these make up the most dramatic of national stories. But during those few dazzling decades of prosperity, and also in the first years of her decline, Spain felt the full influence of the Renaissance and produced a literature instinct with life and enthusiasm. The type of character that prevailed among the Spaniards at the commencement of the sixteenth century, and which was reflected in their literature, was as interesting as it was unique. Its chief characteristic was a vehement, even fanatical, devotion to religion, the product of the centuries during which, inch by inch, they had wrested back their native land from the Moor. 'The Spaniards always felt their warfare to be peculiarly that of soldiers of the Cross; they always felt themselves beyond everything else and above everything else to be Christian men contending against unbelief.'[1] But it was from their hated Arab masters that they inherited the sensuous Oriental mysticism which so strongly colours much of their literature. It was the long crusade, too, which doubtless gave them their peculiarly romantic and chivalrous spirit, so that, long after other nations had put away such things as childish, the stories of 'Amadis of Gaul' and his many descendants, and the stories of the Palmerins were read and re-read in Spain with passionate avidity, existing all through the sixteenth century side by side with the new Italianate literature, until Cervantes, by his satire, gave them their death-blow. And it was not only in books that the spirit of knight-errantry survived; as late as the time

The Spanish Temperament

[1] Ticknor, *History of Spanish Literature*, vol. i. p. 316.

of Ferdinand and Isabella we hear of distinguished noblemen who had gone into foreign countries 'in order,' as the old chronicler says, 'to try the fortune of arms with any cavalier that might be pleased to adventure it with them, and so gain honour for themselves and the fame of valiant and bold knights for the gentlemen of Castile.'[1] Intense pride was of course almost synonymous with the very name of a Spanish hidalgo, and with this was mingled, on the one side an unswerving loyalty to the prince, and on the other an exaggerated devotion to 'the point of honour,' which degenerated almost into a mania.

As one would imagine, the Spaniards were an extremely poetic race. Spain was pre-eminently the land of ballads. The *gai saber* of Provence had flourished in Catalonia and Arragon almost as luxuriantly as in the land of its birth; but, partly from its own inherent delicacy, partly from the gradual predominance of the sterner Castilian language and literature, it was not destined for a much longer life than it had there. An element of it remained, however, even in the courtly Castilian poetry, and we find the *complainte* and the *tenson* and the *glosa* very popular among fifteenth-century poets, who added their own intensity and fire to the honeyed sweetness of the Provençal.

In that century the influence of Italy began to be felt. There had naturally been much communication between the two countries from early times, for Sicily had been the fief of Arragon from the thirteenth century, and, in 1441, Alfonso V. acquired Naples. The similarity of the languages made imitation easy, and Boccaccio and Dante were probably known before the

Italian influence

[1] Ticknor, *History of Spanish Literature*, vol. i. p. 228.

fifteenth century. But it was the Marquis of Santillana who first decidedly showed Italian influence in his writings.

The Marquis of Santillana, 1398-1458

To him belongs the credit of introducing the sonnet into Spain, in a series of seventeen, in which he imitates not only Petrarch but Dante and Guido Cavalcante. A friend and *protégé* of Santillana was Juan de Mena, who also imitated Dante in a somewhat satirical poem called 'The Coronation,' written in honour of his patron; and, more seriously, in the 'Labyrinth,' a poem of 2,500 lines. Juan de Mena's great claim to the gratitude of his countrymen consisted, however, in the service he rendered to the Castilian tongue, which, like most of the old languages, was found inadequate for all the new ideas which came crowding in during the fifteenth century. De Mena borrowed words, not only from Latin but also from modern tongues, and though many of his phrases were ill enough adapted to the national genius, and never became current, yet on the whole he left that noble ancient language richer and stronger than he found it. Castilian henceforth became the literary language of Spain, just as Tuscan was that of Italy; and it was in this tongue that Boscan, the first modern poet of Spain, wrote his Italianate verse.

Juan de Mena, 1411-1456

Boscan, c. 1495-1542

From the beginning of the sixteenth century a fresh impulse had been given to communication with Italy. When Naples, instead of being ruled by descendants of Alfonso V., was governed directly from Spain, and the presence there of a small court of Spaniards was necessitated, and when, a little later, the flower of Spanish chivalry was gathered on the plains of Lombardy to do battle with

the French, the Spaniards were no more able than their enemies to resist the fascinations of the fair land they were despoiling. This was the zenith of Leo's Golden Age, and among those who felt its magnetism was Juan Boscan, the young Catalonian, who was fired with the idea of refashioning Spanish verse (which had scarcely yet risen above the old *redondilla* or ballad metre) by the smooth stately measures of Italy. It would seem that the sonnets of the Marquis of Santillana had made no deep impression on his countrymen, for Boscan regarded himself, and was regarded by his contemporaries, as a pioneer. The Spaniards were too intensely conservative to receive the new style without opposition; but on the whole it was favourably welcomed, and a great number of poets began to essay the Italian measures.

Its success was due less, perhaps, to its originator than to his friend Garcilasso, a poet of far higher genius. The latter, like Boscan, was a soldier, and in early manhood he met his death in a deed of gallantry. His adventurous life and early death (circumstances he shared with so many of the heroes of the Renaissance) made it impossible for him to leave any great amount of poetry; what he did leave has a sad and tender grace, strangely at variance with his stormy career. In his eclogues he shows the influence of the *Arcadia* of Sannazaro (himself a Spaniard by descent), and also of Virgil and Theocritus. His sonnets and *canzoni* are in Petrarch's manner, but always with an individuality of their own, and not infrequently the poet forgets his models, remembering only the restraint they have taught him, and gives free play to his own ardent Spanish spirit. In his poetry we find the dominant characteristic of Spanish literature—passionate,

Garcilasso, 1503-1536

vehement emotion, which not seldom degenerates into extravagance, but which, in the hands of such a master as Garcilasso, and when tempered by Italian refinement, rises to a note of intense melancholy sweetness. Garcilasso's genius was fully recognised by his contemporaries. His work passed through several editions, and suffered many things at the hands of editors and commentators.

Mendoza, 1503-1575

A third poet who, more perhaps by the greatness of his name and fame, helped to firmly establish the Italian school in Spain, was Diego de Mendoza, great-grandson of the Marquis of Santillana, and, like him, scholar and soldier, poet and diplomatist, historian and statesman. Most of his poems were written in his old age, and have more of the gravity of the statesman and scholar than the fire and tenderness of the young soldier. Mendoza did not throw in his lot entirely with the *Petrarquistas*, as their opponents gibingly called the Italian school. Like many other poets of the time, he varied his measures, using the hendecasyllabic or heptasyllabic for grave subjects, and the old Spanish *redondilla*, with its sprightly, tripping music, when in a lighter vein. He was a Humanist, collecting and reading the works of the ancients as enthusiastically as any Italian of the fifteenth century; but he exhibits none of the slavishness of Italian Humanism. His classic studies gave strength and dignity and originality to his compositions both in prose and verse. He was so far from ignoring all that was not Greek or Latin that he made a special study of Arabic, and was able, in his history of the war of Granada, to enter into the feelings of the Moors in a way that was not a little surprising in a member of one of the oldest and proudest of Spanish families. This book,

owing to its fairness and justice, was not published until some years after the author's death, so fiercely did the hatred of their old Arab masters still burn in Spanish breasts. A book that had a much greater immediate influence was a novel written by Mendoza in his gayer youth, entitled *Lazarillo de Tórmes,* the story of a rascal servant, whose amusing adventures under various employers form a lively satire on contemporary manners. The *Lazarillo* was without any sort of precedent, but it took the popular fancy at once, and became the parent of a whole family of romances which related the adventures of some *picaro* or rogue—a family which has no more famous member than *Gil Blas.*

The *picaresque* novel could not, however, oust from popular favour the chivalric romance, which was now more beloved than ever, and had become so extravagant and wild, and had acquired such a hold on the imagination of the people, as to constitute, in the opinion of many of the more thoughtful, a positive danger. But where neither counter-attraction nor legislation availed anything, the irresistible power of raillery proved effective. It was as impossible, after the appearance of 'Don Quixote,' for any serious interest to be taken in the chivalric romance as it is for us to be moved by a sentimental poem when a parody on it is ringing in our ears.

Cervantes is the one Spanish writer of this period whose name is a household word. Of a humanity more simple and homely than Shakespeare's, of a humour more tender and touched with pathos than Rabelais', of a spirit nobler and more elevated than Ariosto's, he unites with these three to represent to us the

Cervantes, 1547-1616

Renaissance. He brings before us a side of Spanish life which has no longer that aspect of sombre, haughty magnificence that it usually wore, but is no less truly national —the life of the simple country people, the peasant, the priest, the surgeon, the poor gentleman struggling with his poverty; he tells us of adventures by the wayside and in the village inns. And again (in his 'Novelas Exemplares') he gives us vivid little pictures of life in the towns; the gay ladies and gentlemen, the gipsies, students, and duennas, and all the incidents of a bright and busy life. We know more of Cervantes the man than we do of most of his contemporaries—far more than we know of Shakespeare—and all we know endears yet more to us this lovable, lighthearted, unfortunate gentleman. Nothing can prove more amply than the story of his life how little opposed he was to the true spirit of chivalry. No *preux chevalier* could have been more honourable, more high-souled than he showed himself, again and again, in the course of his sad and troubled life. At the age of twenty-four we see him, weak with fever, but burning with a patriotic hatred of the Turk, flinging himself into the thick of the sea-fight at Lepanto. A few years later we find him, maimed and a captive, among the pirates of Algiers, planning, with the same indomitable spirit, the escape of himself and his comrades, taking all the responsibility on himself with careless generosity when, time after time, his plans were revealed to his cruel captors. And again, at Valladolid, after long years of the grinding poverty and neglect which are far harder to bear than Fate's sharper buffets, we find him still facing life with a smile on his lips, a smile born of genuine humour and unfailing

sweetness of temper. He is growing old. One by one his hopes have died away. Nothing is left but to drag out his days amid sordid petty cares. He has but two wretched rooms, and these he shares with his wife and several female relations who have sacrificed all the little family fortune for his ransom. But he settles down at his corner of the table in the room that serves for kitchen and work-room, and in the midst of the subdued chatter of the women's voices and the litter of their silks and stuffs (for all are working for their living), he turns all the chequered past into a tissue of innocent fun that hides no bitterness, of whimsical trouble that covers no complaint.[1] Gradually his interest deepens in his hero—the Don Quixote who is at first, with his soaring enthusiasms that work out so unpractically, his great crusades that collapse so lamentably, a sort of caricature of himself as well as of an honourable gentleman crazed by much reading of romances, but who gradually develops, by the addition of one life-giving touch after another, into the gentle, high-souled, mistaken enthusiast, whom we all love. Just in the same way Sancho Panza, from a mere greedy gullible bumpkin, develops into the mixture of simple loyalty and shrewd cunning that makes him so admirable a foil to his visionary master. The book touches a deeper spring of affection in us than any other of its time, and surely its tenderness, its humour, and its genial sympathy with all things human, will prevent it from ever becoming antiquated.

But in the eyes of his contemporaries, Cervantes was altogether eclipsed by a far more brilliant personality, Lope de Vega, who not only was extraordinarily clever,

[1] See Mrs. Oliphant: *Cervantes.*

but had that faculty for keeping himself in the foreground that Cervantes neither had, nor perhaps cared to have.

Lope de Vega, 1562-1635

It is as a dramatist that De Vega is most famous; but his pretensions as a poet and a writer of fiction are not small. When he was twenty-six he sailed with the Armada, and in the midst of all the sufferings of that ill-fated expedition he found time to write a lengthy poem, 'The Beauty of Angelica,' intended as a continuation to the 'Orlando Furioso.' In suffering from inordinate length it only resembled the majority of Lope's poems. Ideas seem to have flowed in so full a stream in this man's mind, and he had such a facility for clothing them in fluent verse, that he found it difficult to make an end. Among his poems are 'Isidoro the Ploughman,' consisting of 10,000 lines, in honour of that saint, and a ten-canto poem entitled 'La Dragontea,' an indictment of Sir Francis Drake, the terror of the Spaniards, in which he rejoices over the death of that 'Protestant Scotch Pirate;' and speaks of Elizabeth as the Scarlet Woman of Babylon. His most ambitious effort was the 'Jerusalen Conquistada,' an imitation, of course, of Tasso, consisting of 22,000 verses, which, in spite of its easy, graceful rhythm, is too tedious and rambling to be read with interest.

Lope well illustrates the peculiar contradictions of the Spanish type of religion. A clever, dashing man of the world, he yet delighted to sign himself 'Familiar of the Holy Office' (of the Inquisition); and he became a priest, performing with regularity the duties of his order, while he continued to produce dramas of, to say the least, questionable morality. Among his sacred works were a long pastoral, in prose and verse, entitled 'The Shepherds of

Bethlehem,' and several shorter poems. It is in these short pieces, and in his ballads and redondillas, that he best shows the vein of real poetic tenderness that did exist beneath the flood of easy eloquence. In such brilliant spectacular functions as the literary contests at Madrid, where Lope acted as Master of the Ceremonies, the famous priest and dramatist, with his rich voice and his perfect *savoir faire*, was in his element. Such was the impression made upon his age by this brilliant personality, that his death was regarded as a public calamity; the funeral lasted nine days, and the whole city was thrown into mourning.

Spain was not often so kind to her geniuses. Quevado, the great satirist of the period, was embittered by the many undeserved sufferings he endured—sufferings which at last put an end to his life. For the Spaniards, a grave haughty race, had little appreciation of satire, especially when, like Quevado's, it had more of the gall of Juvenal than the geniality of Horace. A man of great talents and of administrative capacity, with which he served his country well, Quevado's caustic wit brought unmerited suspicion on him, and he was more than once imprisoned for long periods. Soon after his final release, ill and penniless, he died. He was a strong writer, employing a vivid, expressive, if frequently coarse, style. In his prose satires, among which are a *picaresque* novel, 'The Great Sharper Paul of Segovia,' and a series of short amusing sketches, his great power and fearless originality found full play. In his sonnets he burlesqued the Italianate school, and he also ridiculed the *stilo culto*, a species of affected speech, whose chief exponent was Góngora, and which corresponded to the contemporary Euphuism and

Quevado, 1580-1645

Marinism of England and Italy. But although Quevado satirised the 'Cultos,' he himself belonged to a party who practised a form of affectation quite as detestable, though not so wide-spread. These were the 'Conceptistas,' a mystical sect, who expressed their meaning under a cloak of metaphors and plays upon words.

Lyric poetry

Spain added her full share to the almost universal outburst of lyric song in the sixteenth century. Innumerable sonnets were written, as well as the native *villancicos* and *latrillas* in which the humours and the simple emotions of the people found a voice. Ballads, such as seem to be bound up with the very life of old Spain, became more popular than ever. The old ones were gathered into collections, and many new ones were added to them. There was scarcely a poet who did not add to the number. When national subjects were exhausted, classical history was ransacked for themes. The ballads which Góngora wrote, before he fell a victim to his *cultismo,* are peculiarly quaint and sprightly. Cervantes and Lope de Vega helped to increase the vogue of the ballad by introducing it into their plays.

Romances

In the domain of prose, romance holds the foremost place. Little, indeed, is heard of the Chivalric Romance after the publication of 'Don Quixote.' It was partly superseded by the Pastoral Romance, which was nowhere more admired than in Spain. Pastorals were written by both Lope and Cervantes; but the most famous example is the 'Diana Enamorada,' of George de Montemayor, a Portuguese, (published 1542), which is considered to surpass, in its pathos, its sweetness, and its interesting plot, its great prototype the 'Arcadia' of Sannazaro. The

'Diana' itself gave rise to two or three sequels, and many other imitations followed, the best of which is the 'Golden Age,' by Balbuena, which is remarkable for its descriptions of scenery.

No less popular were the *picaresque* novels, already mentioned, making fun of the idle rogues who especially abounded in a country where war was considered the only occupation worthy of a man. A notable example is the 'Guzman de Alfarache,' by Aleman, which was translated and printed in almost every European language, and to which Ben Jonson refers as

> . . . The Spanish Proteus, which, though writ
> But in one tongue, was formed with the world's wit.

A number of historical romances were produced, but these were less popular. Great favour was shewn to a species of short story, somewhat resembling the Italian *novella*, though on the whole thoroughly national in style and subject. Juan de Timoneda, dramatist, bookseller, and ballad writer, was one of the earliest to form a collection of these tales, many of which were probably old stories which had been told and re-told from the time of the troubadours.

There is no doubt that the growth of serious, thoughtful literature was impeded, choked, and finally checked altogether, by the religious bigotry of the Spaniards. If the English Renaissance had to contend with the Reformation, the Spanish Renaissance had the Catholic Reaction and its engine, the Inquisition, to reckon with. It was only in Italy that the secular movement had time to develop fully before the

Influence of the Catholic Reaction

reaction which it provoked set in. Spain dragged all her most enlightened and thoughtful men before the Inquisition, where, if they themselves escaped imprisonment and torture, their books were often condemned and burnt. While Lope de Vega was proud to sign himself its 'Familiar,' Mariana, the greatest of Spanish historians, a man of extraordinary power, political wisdom, and sincerity, was imprisoned and punished, and his writings destroyed. Luis de Leon, a poet, a profound scholar, a preacher of burning eloquence, and a man of the holiest life, whose only crime was that of translating the 'Canticles' into Spanish for a friend, was haled before the Inquisitors and spent five years in their dungeons, where he wrote his beautiful book of devotion called 'The Names of Christ.' It was impossible that a great or original literature should flourish under such cramping terrors. Everywhere outside the domain of mere frivolity we find a timidity, a shrinking from full expression, from serious inquiry. When we look through the books, 'from the abject title-pages and dedications of the authors themselves, through the crowd of certificates collected from their friends to establish the orthodoxy of works that were often as little connected with religion as fairy tales, down to the colophon supplicating pardon for any unconscious neglect of the authority of the Church, or any too free use of classic mythology, we are continually oppressed with painful proofs, not only how completely the human mind was enslaved in Spain, but how grievously it had become cramped and crippled by the chains it had so long worn.' [1]

[1] Ticknor, *History of Spanish Literature*, vol. i. p. 430.

Thus did the Catholic Reaction, which, with its Jesuits and its Inquisition, formed the 'last great phenomenon of the Spanish Renaissance,' crush out all that was best and most living in the national literature.

Section V.—In Germany

We need not pause over the German literature of this period. Even in Art, where Germany most felt the stirrings of the Renaissance spirit, the dominant note was still Gothic and mediæval. Her best literary activity was, for the most part, either squandered in the interminable disputes of the Humanists, or swallowed up in the quagmire of religious controversy. There was, it is true, a vigorous undergrowth of popular literature; but even here, whether in such famous satires as 'Das Narrenschiff, (by Sebastian Brandt, published 1494); or 'Eulenspiegel' (by Murner, published 1519), or in the innumerable homely verses of Hans Sachs, the shoemaker and Meistersinger, or even in the hymns of the Protestants, we find very little that is modern in its tone, very little that marks out this period as the beginning of a new era.

CHAPTER V

THE RISE OF THE DRAMA

THE most characteristic of the direct products of the Renaissance, with the exception of Italian art, was the national Drama, as it was developed in England and Spain. Characteristic, because life itself was to the men of the Renaissance of the nature of a pageant, a splendid show. Their passionate, vehement spirits, their sensuous beauty-loving natures, could best find utterance and satisfaction in the rant and fury, and in the voluptuous strongly-painted scenes of love and passion of their Theatre. Their affected euphuistic speech, their very dress, with its picturesque extravagance, show how strong in them was the dramatic instinct.

The quick development of the drama

The magnificent drama of the sixteenth century was not the climax of a gradual development, we can put our hands on the first tragedy and the first comedy. It sprang into existence as the result of the meeting of two elements, an old and a new. The old element was of course the religious representation, with such rudimentary secular drama as had grown out of it; and the new was the influence of the classic dramatists, especially Seneca and Plautus. To these elements we must add a third, in the vigorous na-

tional genius which could take the two and fuse them in the fire of its imagination, giving them strength and glow and vitality. It can easily be shown that neither from the religious plays alone, nor yet from the classical, could the modern drama have been evolved.

The religious play and

Wherever the Catholic faith spread, with its festivals and its significant, almost dramatic, ceremonial, it was found helpful, in days when few could read, and minds were not very receptive, to supplement and emphasise the teaching of the Church by acting the simple stories of the Bible before the people. At first these were represented by the clergy in the churches, and were in Latin. They were as simple and devout as the visit to the crib at Christmastide in Roman churches now. But, as time went on, they became longer and more elaborate. Latin gave place to the vernacular, a certain amount of scenery was required—especially if it was desired to represent Heaven, Earth, and Hell, in a stage of three stories; and it was found more convenient to hold the performances in secular buildings. In England, where these plays were ruder than in France, they were often played on a rough stage, which was wheeled about the streets, into which the action was allowed to overflow. It will easily be understood how, in order to popularise these plays among an ignorant people, a certain amount of license was permitted to creep into the dialogue—lively repartee between the good and bad characters, or a bit of rough-and-tumble play among the bad or less important ones. There was nothing incongruous to the mediæval mind in this mingling of pure buffoonery with the most sacred subjects.

The fifteenth century was the most flourishing time for the religious plays. By this time they were divided, in France, and less regularly in England, into three different kinds: the 'Mystery,' representing scenes from the life of our Lord; the 'Miracle,' which dealt with the acts of the saints; and the 'Morality' (a later development), in which abstract personifications of vices and virtues were introduced. The 'Moralities,' dull as they seem to us, were in accord with the allegorising temper of the age, and were extremely popular. They were often of inordinate length, taking days and even weeks to perform. They were enlivened by the tricks of a stock comic character, the Vice (prototype of the Fool of the regular drama), between whom and his master, the Devil, a lively interchange of words and blows was kept up. These plays retained their popularity long into the sixteenth century. It was not until 1547, that the *Confrairie de la Passion* (who had been licensed in 1402 to perform Mysteries in Paris) had their license taken away on account of their buffoonery and irreverence. Thenceforward religious plays were forbidden in Paris, but they survived long afterwards in other parts of France.

Other plays existed, however, closely allied to these. It was only a step from enlivening a religious theme with a comic interlude, to presenting such an interlude or farce by itself. In France, these farces were particularly good; one of the best known is 'Maître Pierre Pathelin' (published 1490), a very amusing little play, written in octosyllabic metre, in which the wit and satire compare well with the clumsy buffoonery of its English contemporaries. The Morality lent itself very easily to

its secular offshoots

secularisation, and was an admirable vehicle for satire. Many of the later specimens contain hardly any moral teaching, but are directed against political or social evils. These plays were acted in Paris by the *Bazochiens*, the law-clerks of the *Bazoche*, who were formed into a guild by Philip the Fair in 1303, and who became so personal and unbridled in their satire that, in 1516, they were forbidden to refer to princes or princesses of the court. In 1536 all personal reference was forbidden, and in 1538 they were required to submit the MSS. of proposed plays to a court censor. A peculiar development of the Morality was the '*Sotie*' or 'Folly,' played by a company of young Parisian gentlemen calling themselves *Les Enfans sans Souci*. A very interesting play, which unites in a tetralogy all these species, was 'Le Prince des Sots et la Mère Sotte,' by Gringore, who himself took the stock part of the 'Mère Sotte.' The play was produced in 1511, and consists of (1) the 'Cry,' summoning all fools to see the prince of fools play on Shrove Tuesday; (2) the 'Folly,' a satire directed against the Pope and the clergy; (3) the 'Morality,' chiefly political; (4) the 'Farce,' which was of a licentious character.

Gringore, c. 1475-1538

The English had the equivalent of these secular plays in their farces and interludes. A famous writer of the latter species in the beginning of the century was Henry Heywood. One of his interludes, which was played before Henry VIII. in 1535, bore the title 'Of Gentylnesse and Nobylyte: a Dialogue between the Marchaunt, the Knyght and the Plowman, compiled in manner of an Enterlude with divers Toys and Gestes added thereto, to make mery Pastime and Disport.'

Henry Heywood

The old plays of Germany were much the same as those in England, except that the religious and the comic elements were less mixed together, the latter being confined to the 'Fastnachts-spiel' or carnival play (*e.g.* the Apotheosis of Pope Joan, 1480). The most famous producer, both of these plays and an enormous number of others, sacred and profane, was *Hans Sachs*, the Meistersinger of Nuremberg.

Hans Sachs, 1494-1576

In Italy the development was somewhat different. Instead of miracle and mystery plays (though the Passion was occasionally represented from early times) we find 'Laudesi,' a species of dramatic religious office, chaunted by confraternities such as the 'Disciplinati di Gesù.' As the dramatic element in these increased they were called 'Divozioni,' and were represented with more elaborate staging; and finally they were developed into the 'Sacra Rappresentazione,' an extremely elaborate religious pageant peculiar to Florence in and after the days of Lorenzo the Magnificent, who himself wrote the words for one which was acted by his children. The words of most of these shows possess little dramatic force, the interest all centring in the pageant, and the costly elaborate staging, such as Florence had always been famous for. A nearer approach was made to the true drama when it became a frequent thing to dramatise—instead of an orthodox religious legend—a romantic story in which the hero or heroine displays in a high degree some Christian virtue. The Italian religious plays had nothing of the grotesque popular element of those in the north. The popular play of the Interlude type is there best represented by the Neapolitan *farsa*, which might well, under more

Religious Plays in Italy

favourable circumstances, have developed into true national comedy. That it did not, and that the true drama arose neither in Italy, where the religious representation had most of pomp and splendour, nor in France, where it was most scientifically organised, is significant, as showing that it is not in the mediæval play alone that we must look for its origin. It needed the electrifying contact of the strength, the skill, the constructive power of the old drama to take up the human interest and the raciness of the native stage, and shape it into regular comedy or tragedy. The failure of French and Italian dramatists of the Renaissance lay in the fact (among other causes too psychological to be discussed in this brief outline) that they could not realise that the classic form was inadequate by itself, without the popular native element.

The classical play (*a*) tragedy

In Italy the presentation of plays in Latin, either those of Seneca, Plautus, and Terence, or others written in imitation of them, was as old as Humanism itself. Petrarch is said to have written a Latin comedy. When, in the revival of Italian at the end of the fifteenth century, plays began to be written in the native tongue, the same models were retained. In their unfortunate choice of Seneca, the Humanists, who never seemed to appreciate the pre-eminence of Greek over Latin, were actuated by a belief that he had improved upon the form of the Greek drama, forgetting that his plays were written for recitation not acting. Scorning native humour as provincial, they produced plays on the strictest classical lines: *i.e.* with close attention to the unities; division into five acts; few characters; little or no change of scene; no action except in the reports of

messengers; a moralising chorus; and interminable monologues. Trissino was one of the first of these writers of regular drama. His tragedy 'Sofonisba,' though not acted until 1562, was probably written about the same time as Rucellai's 'Rosmunda,' which was performed before Leo X. at Florence in 1515. Speron Sperone's 'Canace' belongs to the same category of plays written by pedants in their studies: plays concocted by a strict mechanical following of the rules of Aristotle and Horace—scholastic exercises, showing how well the author knew his lesson, but how little he knew or cared about human nature; their characters are mere automata, with no vitality, no sympathy, no pulse of blood in them. It is not that the plots are wanting in excitement. Horrible tales of murder and lust were dramatised. But from a mistaken zeal for Horace's warning dogma, none of these stirring events are permitted to happen on the stage. The usual plan is something of this sort: Act I. consists of a lengthy conversation full of sententious rhetoric between the hero and his valet; Act II. of a similar conversation between the heroine and her confidante; in Act III. one of the parents discusses the situation with his or her own servant; in Act IV. two of the servants moralise together on the subject; and in Act V. a messenger enters and announces all the catastrophes that have happened at last, but out of sight. This is the type to which our own first tragedy, 'Gorboduc,' belongs. This play, which is usually ascribed to Sackville and Norton, was produced in January, 1562, at the Christmas festivities of the Inner Temple, when the Lord of Misrule rode through London in gilt harness with a hundred horse, and gentlemen 'rid-

Trissino

'Gorboduc'

ing gorgeously with chains of gold.' In France, Du Bellay's call for good drama was responded to by a young member of the *Pléiade*, Etienne Jodelle, another of those ardent Renaissance spirits whose short lives burnt themselves out, consumed by a hunger for mastery in every domain of human knowledge. Jodelle produced, in 1552, at the same time and with great *éclat*, the first French tragedy and the first French comedy. The tragedy was 'Cleopatre' which has all the characteristics mentioned above, and especially the interminable soliloquies. Six years later he produced another tragedy, 'Didon,' written entirely in Alexandrines, a metre which was thenceforward established in France as the correlative of our blank verse. The classical tragedy was brought to perfection by Garnier, who made a new departure in his choice of a story from Ariosto for his play 'Bradamante,' as well as in the combining of tragic and comic elements, and who reached, in 'Les Juives' and others of his eight tragedies, a very high level of impassioned dignified poetry.

Jodelle

Garnier, 1534-1590

In Spain the classical drama met with as little encouragement as in England. Two tragedies on the Senecan model were produced by Bermudez (1577), who called them the first Spanish Tragedies; but a far more living and national drama was, as we shall see, already in possession of the stage.

The classical comedy was inevitably less artificial than the tragedy. Plautus was the model, and, in Italy, Ariosto, Machiavelli, and Aretino the principal authors. In their plays, instead of the real, if undeveloped, humour of the native farce, we find the stock

(*b*) Comedy

classic situations—the changing of children, confusions of sex, discoveries of lost relatives—always *complication* instead of plot; and the stock comic characters—the parasite, the slave, the courtesan. We may ask how it was that an Italian audience, however courtly and learned it might be, could find enjoyment in the presentment of plays so formal and unreal, for the Italians had their full share of the Renaissance love of gaiety and life. We find the answer, partly in the real enthusiasm for the classics which was diffused among them; partly in the extreme licentiousness of these plays, which, though revolting to a modern reader, probably stimulated the jaded appetite of that corrupt society; partly in the fact that the classical plays were frequently presented in a setting of music and dancing, of scenery painted by a Raphael—in fact, of all the accessories of an elaborate masque. These were not woven into the comedy, but were introduced at the beginning and end and between the acts. Aretino, as one would expect from his combined audacity and ignorance, broke away from the stereotyped form, and refused to be fettered by classical restraints. It is unfortunate that he did not possess sufficient genius to set going a real national comedy; but he was entirely occupied in giving pictures of the basest side of the private life of dissipated prelates and vicious nobles. There was a third species of drama in Italy which contained far more promise than either the tragedy or the comedy; this was the pastoral drama (the parent of the *Opera*) of which Politian's exquisite 'Orfeo' (1472) is the first example, and which was brought to perfection in the 'Aminta' of Tasso, and the 'Pastor Fido' of Guarini.

The pastoral drama

Here we find the music and pageantry of the masque wedded to the sweetest lyric poetry, forming an idyllic whole, which, in its enervating beauty, was far better suited to the Italian temperament of the sixteenth century than was the strenuous activity of the real drama.

Jodelle's first comedy was entitled 'Eugène.' It is much more interesting and more in tune with national sentiment than his tragedies. Real originality and humour appear in the comedies of Larivey; but, instead of applying his vigorous wit and literary power to the production of original plays, he contented himself with free translations from Italian. The French comedy was certainly the least spiritless of the products of the Humanistic drama; but classical and Italian influence lay heavily on all the writers, and their work is always foreign and artificial. It was only in England, and in a less degree in Spain, that the full tide of Renaissance vigour was turned into a national drama.

The drama in England

For a while in England the two streams flowed side by side. The people had their rough-and-tumble interludes in the inn-yards and on the village greens, while at the Court, at the Universities, at the Inns of Court, and in great houses, classical plays were enacted, and plays from the Italian, such as Gascoigne's 'Supposes' from the 'Suppositi' of Ariosto. To all appearance the English stage was in the same condition as those of France and Italy, except that here the popular plays were even ruder, and the classical plays more formal. But the attitude of the middle-class towards the drama was different in England from what it was in those countries. There was not the same widespread enthusi-

asm for the ancients as in Italy; Humanism had shaken off much of its pedantry before it reached our shores, and had become identified with general culture; but general culture had not permeated far enough to make books a popular source of entertainment. Again, the drama is ill-suited to a languid, enervated race. It is more strenuous than other forms of literature, and makes a greater demand upon the intellectual powers both of author and audience. England was the youngest and strongest of the nations. If it had been the most straitly bound under the Feudal yoke, the reaction was all the more violent. The exuberance and intoxication which we associate with the Renaissance were especially English. The turbulent passionate spirit of the people demanded a popular drama, and it was offering it a stone for bread to put before it 'Gorboduc' and plays of its type. The formless but lively chronicle plays and farces were preferred. But already (about 1540) a genuine English comedy was in existence.

Udall, c. 1506-1556

'Ralph Royster Doister' was written by Nicholas Udall, head-master of Eton, for his boys to act at Christmas time. Udall had already written and translated Latin plays, and so had caught the classical spirit (which is shown in the regularity of the plot of 'Ralph Royster Doister,' and in the characters, two of whom belong to the classic stock); but this is a thoroughly national comedy. It is a merry, decent play, much superior in language and construction to our second comedy 'Gammer Gurton's Needle.' This was the first English play to be represented at either University, being played at Cambridge about 1565. It is ascribed to John Still, Bishop of Bath and Wells, and contains the famous drinking song,

'Back and sides go bare, go bare.' Both these early comedies are in a loose rhyming metre.

The courtly, scholarly plays were performed before the Queen (who had a keen appreciation of them) and other fashionable people, by the Children of the Chapel Royal, of whom Richard Edwards, the dramatist, was Master, and by the Children of St. Paul's, of Windsor, and of Westminster. But there were other players, who formed themselves into companies as the 'servants' of this or that noble, and who played for the public entertainment; and these did not confine themselves to classical plays. Their theatres were most often the courtyards of inns, a stage being erected at one end, while the gallery of the floor above helped to form the setting. In May, 1574, the Earl of Leicester, in spite of the opposition of the civic authorities, procured for his own 'servants' (who included the famous Burbadge) the first royal patent to play comedies, &c. in London, 'except in time of common prayer or plague.' Passionately devoted as the mass of English people were to pageantry of every kind, there was a very strong Puritan section which was as violently opposed to it, and which, especially by its representatives in the City Council, contested every step of the way in the ensuing rapid advance of the drama. The consequence of this opposition was that when Burbadge built the first theatre, in 1576, it was erected at Blackfriars, outside the city walls. In the same year two other theatres were erected outside the walls, at Shoreditch, the *Theatre* and the *Curtain*. In the next year, a year of plague, a preacher at St. Paul's Cross speaks of the 'sumptuous theatre houses,' and adds: 'The cause of plagues is sin,

The players

The theatre

and the cause of sin are playes, therefore the cause of plagues are playes.' Plays were performed by daylight, and at first only on Sundays and Holy days; but in 1583 Sunday performances were forbidden. Ten years later the theatre which we most associate with Shakespeare, a hexagonal building called the *Globe*, was commenced by the Blackfriars Company at Bankside, and the old Blackfriars theatre was given up to the use of the Children of the Chapel Royal. Before we pass from the buildings to the plays, we may remind the reader that female parts were still played by boys, and that the people's theatres had none of the gorgeous dressing and elaborate scenery of the court masques, the name of the place painted on a board serving as often as not to indicate the scene. There were few properties and few supers; a troop of cavalry might be represented by two or three men, each astride of a broomstick hung with cloth. The common people stood in the pit, exposed to the weather, while the 'quality' sat about the stage. Such were the primitive conditions under which the most magnificent drama of the world was produced.

Early in the eighties the English stage was still in a chaotic condition, and Sidney, feeling the rudeness of the farce, the shapelessness of the chronicle, and the hopeless (and, in his opinion, undeserved) unpopularity of the classical plays—penned his censure of it as 'observing rules neither of honest civility nor skilful poetry.' But all the elements of a great drama were in existence, striving towards the form that could express them. The rant that strikes so absurdly on our ears was the passionate inarticulate vehemence of those who felt strongly, but had

no command of language to express what they felt; the buffoonery was but the unrestrained humour of players whose audience consists only of pit and gallery. It only needed a master-hand to take up all this vigorous, virile stuff, and with cunning bred of familiarity with the methods of the pagan dramatists, to cleanse and refine it, and cast it into shape. This was done by Shakespeare's predecessors, the group of young men whom we call the University Wits, who came up to town about the time of Sidney's death, and who included Marlowe, Greene, Peele, Lodge, Nash, and Kyd. Lyly is usually classed with them, though he was a courtier rather than a Bohemian, such as they were. His plays, of which 'Campaspe' is the best known, are of a pastoral and mythological character, interspersed with charming lyrics and accompanied by music; more, in fact, of the nature of a masque than the true drama; they were played by the Children of St. Paul's before the Queen. Different from Lyly's gentle, serious mood was the temper of the fiery spirits who make up the rest of the group. We have not space to deal with them singly, but most of the qualities they represent were possessed in excess by Marlowe.

The University Wits

Christopher Marlowe was born only a month or two before Shakespeare. He was the son of a shoemaker at Canterbury, but by the help of some rich friend he was educated at Cambridge. We know but little of his life, and that little is discreditable enough. Its stormy course came to an end when he was twenty-nine, and was stabbed in the eye in a tavern brawl. His work was composed under the most unfavourable circumstances,

Marlowe, 1564-1593

in the semi-lucid intervals in a life of utter reckless debauchery. Some wretched stuff he wrote indeed, but here and there are flashes of such wonderful perfect poetry, scenes of such passionate power, thoughts so daring and original, verse so 'lift upward and divine,' that it seems the saddest of all the tragedies of literature that such a genius should have been so marred, and that a life, which might have given so much to the world, should have been cut short for a tavern-woman's kiss. We have only six plays that Marlowe wrote, of which 'Edward II.' is the last and best. The first and most famous was 'Tamburlaine,' which was produced before 1587. It was received with enthusiasm, as if the people saw in it at once the type of the drama they had been striving after. And yet there was never rant like the rant of 'Tamburlaine.' Marlowe's colossal imagination, unbridled by any sense of humour, and his impetuous temper, vent themselves in 'Tamburlaine's' 'high astounding terms,' his frenzy of self-adoration as he harnesses the conquered kings, 'the pampered jades of Asia,' to his chariot. In 'Faustus' a much deeper note is touched. Nothing has ever been written that excels the closing scene for stroke upon stroke of deepening horror, of culminating doom. 'Faustus' is the embodiment of the unquenchable thirst of the men of this century for knowledge of any sort and at any price, but above all for knowledge of antiquity. The excellence of Marlowe's poetry depends not only on his fire and his adoration of beauty, but also on his choice of a medium. He is often called the inventor of blank verse, because, although it had been used before, and was probably suggested to him by 'Gorboduc,' yet Sackville's verse was so hard and

dull that the rhymed couplet still held the first place in popular favour until the splendid sweep and swirl of Marlowe's ringing lines drove it finally from the stage. It is not easy to define the secret of 'Marlowe's mighty line'; so indefinable is it that a generation or two later, while men were still in possession of it (as they thought), it evaded their grasp and became mysteriously lost. But we need only compare a passage from Sackville with one from Marlowe to see how immense was the advance he made. The one is monotonous, each line standing stiffly alone until it falls with a thud on the last syllable, while, in the other, variety is given by a skilful use of pause and accent, and lines are combined together to form rounded sonorous passages. Marlowe found blank verse alternately flabby and wooden; he left it 'capable of rolling thunders and of whispering sighs.' The following lines are a specimen of his work at its very best; a height of serenity and tenderness to which his stormy muse did not often attain:

> If all the pens that ever poets held
> Had fed the feeling of their masters' thoughts,
> And every sweetness that inspired their hearts,
> Their minds, and muses, on admired themes;
> If all the heavenly quintessence they 'stil
> From their immortal flowers of poesy,
> Wherein as in a mirror we perceive
> The highest reaches of a human wit,
> If these had made one poem's period,
> And all combined in beauty's worthiness,
> Yet should there hover in their restless heads
> One thought, one grace, one wonder at the least
> Which into words no virtue can digest.

The others—Greene, Peele, Lodge, Nash, and Kyd—were all wild scapegraces like their leader. Their lives,

too, were short and turbulent, spent in haunting taverns and writing for the players. For a vivid picture of this jovial but yet miserably sordid Bohemianism, we must refer the reader to Greene's 'Groatsworth of Wit,' written during one of his fits of penitence. These were the first professional men of letters. Hitherto, as we have seen, writers had to undergo the ignominy of hanging about the Court, or at the heels of patrons; but with the sudden bound into popular favour of the drama there arose a constant demand for plays, and these were sufficiently well paid for to furnish some sort of a living. The tragedies of this school are full of fury and horror; blood was so cheap on the stage that it excited no emotion until it flowed in torrents. All the action is abrupt, violent, frenzied. This is less the case with Peele than the others; some of his plays were written for the Court, and contain many passages of quiet beauty. 'David and Bethsabe,' and the 'Arraignment of Paris,' are his best known plays. Kyd, on the other hand, is the most ferocious and bloodthirsty of all; his 'Hieronimo' passed into a proverb on this account. Nash is brilliant, satirical, and versatile. Greene, whose best play is 'Friar Bacon and Friar Bungay,' is a poet and a Euphuist, and all his work is marked by poetic power, which here and there breaks out in delightful snatches of song. Indeed, all the plays of this school are set with brilliant jewels of lyric verse.

The University Wits gave the public some idea as to what a play ought to be. Their quick literary instinct taught them just how much of classical regularity and strictness was conformable to the national spirit. Accepting the general form and the metre of classical drama,

they threw aside the benumbing Horatian rule against action on the stage, and they retained the old English interweaving of tragic and comic interests, which was not allowed by the ancients, but remained a distinguishing mark of our drama; they had not yet, however, mastered the science of constructing a tragedy, nor had they learned to draw characters that stand out as living beings, rather than mere exponents of some vice or virtue. It was not yet considered necessary to weave a love interest into every tragedy, and the female characters are, for the most part, feebly drawn.

When Marlowe died he was still holding the field, for Shakespeare had only produced his three early comedies, the 'Two Gentlemen of Verona,' 'The Comedy of Errors,' and 'Love's Labour's Lost,' none of which reach the standard of 'Edward II.' But the playwrights had an uneasy consciousness that there was a dangerous rival among them, as we know from Greene's petulant outburst in the envoy to his 'Groatsworth of Wit':—'trust them not, for there is an upstart crow beautified with our feathers, that with his tiger's heart wrapped in a player's hide, supposes that he is as well able to bombast out a blank verse as the best of you; and being an absolute Johannes Factotum, is in his own conceit the only Shake-scene in a country.'

Shakespeare, 1564-1616

Greene's words are but the distempered complaining of a man who was ill in body and mind, for the frank apology of his editor Chettle, and other contemporary evidence, shows that Shakespeare was loved for his genial temper rather than hated for his superiority.

When one is reading Marlowe, carried away by the

torrent of his passionate energy, dazzled by his lightning flashes of brilliant poetry, one is sometimes tempted to think that, had his life been longer, and had his surroundings been less unfavourable, the age would have known a second Shakespeare. As we can only spare a very small space in which to speak of Shakespeare, perhaps a comparison of the two poets will be as good a way as another of appreciating the reasons why the memory of Marlowe is but a splendid broken fragment, typical indeed of the glowing tempestuous age he lived in; while the glory of Shakespeare shines out with a steady radiance, as of one who gathered in all his age had to give him, and, transcending it, became the greatest writer the world has yet known. In comparing their works, the most obvious point that strikes one is the *evenness* of Shakespeare. Marlowe rises to the topmost height of passionate fervour, or of sensuous imagery, and then falls into the merest claptrap of the chronicle play. Shakespeare, whether he is depicting terrible scenes of madness and murder, or the downfall of ruined greatness, or the talk of lovers, or the inconsequent foolery of clowns, is always at the full height the subject demands. And this leads us to Shakespeare's *universality;* while his predecessor only draws one side of life—the tyrannous power of great lusts—on his vast canvas appears every phase of human existence, its emotions, its passions, its crimes, its weaknesses, its griefs, its loves, its terrors, its bitternesses, its heroisms. Marlowe and Ben Jonson imagine an overgrown attribute (a lust or a 'humour') which completely hides the human character of the person who is made to display it. Shakespeare draws his people from within: he becomes a part of them; and so we are able

to see all the cross play of light and shade, all the complexities, the self-contradictions, which go to the making of a living human being. In no play is the difference between Shakespeare and his predecessors shown so well as in 'Hamlet,' the first 'problem play.' No other writer of his time could have conceived the idea of a play which turns upon, not the physical, but the mental struggles of the hero with his destiny. Kyd could have taken the old Danish tale, and have made the people's teeth chatter at the ghost; he could have shown us Hamlet borne up on the crest of a wave of vengeful fury, 'tearing the passion to tatters'; we should have had some fearful scenes of horror and bloodshed as he wreaked his wrath on the trembling king. But Shakespeare is fascinated at once by the psychological side of the question, the effect of the dreadful legacy upon a young, finely-strung, subtly-intellectual mind. Again, Shakespeare possesses in a high degree the *moral sanity* which is wanting among the University Wits. Most of them men of wild ungoverned passions, they introduce scenes of wickedness and lust from mere artistic pleasure in delineating violent emotions. These scenes point no moral subserve no higher purpose; whereas, in Shakespeare's plays (setting aside 'Pericles' and 'Titus Andronicus,' in which he had probably but a very small share), not only is the language more temperate, but there is always in the background an unalterable standard of high thinking, a perception of the 'Divinity that shapes our ends.' Marlowe often failed for lack of the restraining, self-criticising, force of a sense of *humour*, such as his great successor possessed in a degree which was altogether abnormal at

that period, and which shows itself in the raillery of young ladies and gentlemen, in the irresistible drolleries of Dogberry or Sir Andrew Aguecheek, in the serious 'northern humour' of Hamlet, and adds poignancy and reality to tragic scenes by its underlying presence.

Finally, Shakespeare made a great step in advance of his predecessors in one important respect—the *constructive power*—without which all the other qualities we have mentioned could never have made him the chief of dramatists. Little as he knew of Greek, he found out, either by intuition or study, the scientific method by which the dramatist gets a real grip of his play. The tragedies of Marlowe's school were too often a mere piling up of horrible scenes; whereas, in 'Macbeth,' we have an example of a thoroughly well-constructed play, coherent, well knit together, in which the action adheres closely to the Greek precedent. There is the δέσις, the tying of the knot; the gradual growth towards the height of the action; the climax; the λύσις, or untying of the knot, the fall towards the inevitable catastrophe, and then the final disaster. Yet Shakespeare was no slave to classical rules. In 'Hamlet,' where almost the whole of the play is occupied with the first step, the δέσις, and where the climax and catastrophe are put off until they come with appalling and unexpected suddenness at the close. He especially excels in the skilful interweaving of a by-plot with the main action, or even of two actions, whereas in the plays of many of his contemporaries, the underplot is so completely separate that it seems to be the work of another hand, as indeed it is in some of Middleton's tragedies, where the farcical portion was written by Rowley.

We know little for certain as to the dates of Shakespeare's plays, except that they follow more or less in the order one would expect from their style. It is not difficult to trace the gradual maturing of his powers through the early comedies, with their lightness and gaiety, and their rhyming lines; the historical plays, in which the influence of Marlowe shows itself in the gradual shaking off of the rhymed couplet, and the gradual concentration of the interest on particular characters; the more satirical comedies, already shadowed by the gloom which soon culminates in the great tragedies, where passion and agony reach their full height, but always held in check and intensified by restraint, and dignity, and knowledge; and then, the zenith of his genius passed, and the power and passion somewhat spent, we come to the later plays, hardly to be classed either as tragedies or comedies, as the 'Tempest,' 'Cymbeline,' and the 'Winter's Tale.'

We often hear it said that the Renaissance produced (or was produced by) a type of men of peculiar physique, more healthy, and more strenuous in every way than the normal—capable of a greater range of action and emotion; and we can well believe it, when, after reading Shakespeare's plays, and seeing how his mind had been the home of a series of passions that would have gone near to shattering the sensitive organisation of a Shelley, a Keats, or a Byron, we turn to his life and to his portrait, and see the quiet, simple, business-like gentleman, with the placid face, who emerges from it all, and goes home to his native village to end his days, leaving his priceless plays to take their chance of perishing or being preserved for posterity.

Ben Jonson, like Shakespeare, was an actor as well as

a playwright; but here the resemblance ends: in the character of their lives and works they differed widely. Jonson was of a tempestuous, rugged nature, prone to misfortunes which he bore with but indifferent patience. In his plays he struck out a new line for himself, adhering closely however to the classical model. In his first comedy, 'Every man in His Humour,' he struck the keynote of his work. Leaving the drama of action and passion represented by the earlier Renaissance playwrights, he took for his own province the drama of character, where the persons are types in which the follies and vices of the age are satirised—in his own words:

Ben Jonson, 1573-1637

> Persons such as comedy would choose
> When she would show an image of the times
> And sport with human follies not with crimes.

He would have 'held up the mirror to the age' more faithfully but for his over-ridden hobby of 'humours,' which eventually, hardening into dry abstractions, robbed his characters of reality and life. He thus defines his conception of a humour:

> 'As when some one peculiar quality
> Doth so possess a man that it doth draw
> All his affects, his spirits, and his powers,
> In their confluxions, all to run one way—
> This may be truly said to be a humour.'

Wearisome as this notion becomes in some of his later plays, where the dry morality is thinly veiled under such names as 'Pecunia,' 'Sordido,' or 'Mortgage,' when

handled in Jonson's early vigorous manner, as in 'Every Man in His Humour,' or 'Volpone,' it produced magnificent results. While lacking the imaginative introspective power of Shakespeare, and his ease, Jonson excels in skilful composition. Even if they do show the marks of the tool, the comedies are perfect specimens of workmanship—compact, well thought out, well balanced. In his tragedies, 'Sejanus' and 'Catiline,' he keeps still closer to classical tradition. They have not, of course, the pseudo-classicism of 'Gorboduc,' but in their pedantry and stiffness, and strict regard for the unities, they mark a step backward from Shakespeare. Force is Jonson's chief characteristic, a savage energy that flung itself wholly into all that he undertook; this energy often takes the place of passion, in which he was wanting; but his last and unfinished play, 'The Sad Shepherd,' shows of what gleams of tenderness and pathos this rugged nature was capable. The poetic side of Jonson's character is best seen in the masques, where, too, his Renaissance love of gorgeousness and splendour had full play. The masque had been introduced from Italy in the reign of Henry VIII. and had become extremely fashionable as a Court amusement. There were at first no words, pageantry being the chief element, which in that age of finery afforded an admirable opportunity for displaying the gorgeous bejewelled dresses of the nobles and ladies who took part in it. The scenery and stage appliances were elaborate and beautiful, and the whole was accompanied by music, and enlivened by dances. In Ben Jonson's time this species of play was reaching the height of its popularity, almost eclipsing the drama, and he was in much request

as a writer of masques, which were no longer in dumb show, but gave opportunity for graceful and varied verse, generally allegorical or mythological in subject. The most remarkable of Jonson's masques, which are always more pithy than the airy trifles that were in vogue, is 'Pleasure Reconciled to Virtue,' in which Milton's 'Comus' makes his first appearance as a masquer.

In his later years Jonson lost much of the popularity he enjoyed at first; public taste was undergoing a change for the worse, to which he could not and would not conform. But he always retained the only sort of esteem for which he had ever cared—the cultivated appreciation of men of letters. Most of the rising poets and dramatists were his devoted adherents, 'sealed of the tribe of Ben.' His great rugged, masterful figure dominates the age, for all the influences that were strongest in it met together to form his character.

In Beaumont and Fletcher we reach the phase in the Renaissance which we shall presently have to notice in dealing with other arts, the phase in which the artist is no longer swept away by the inspiration of his subject, but having become conscious of his powers and exulting in his mastery over the technicalities of his art, uses the subject as a vehicle to display these powers. Beaumont and Fletcher, the masters of an exquisite lyric style ranging from melting sweetness to such splendid heights as Cæsar's apostrophe to the dead Pompey, able to delineate the humours of contemporary manners and the working out of wild passions with equal skill, make almost too lavish a show of the treasures of their store-house. 'They would

Beaumont, 1584-1616

Fletcher, 1579-1625

have a catastrophe in every scene,' says Hazlitt, 'so that you have none at last; they would raise admiration to its height in every line, so that the impression of the whole is comparatively loose and desultory.' [1]

The later Elizabethans

Besides these young exuberant spirits, among the dramatists of this generation are numbered Chapman, the man of Homeric strength and power, who was yet unable to 'clear his mouth of pebbles and his brow of fog'; Marston, the respectable country parson, who, with his coarseness and his savage force, makes a strange contrast to his friend Dekker the vagabond, who had such a wonderful lyric faculty, and wrote with so much humour, pathos, and tenderness; Middleton, with his thrilling tragedies and his rattling comedies; and quiet, sober Heywood. These men still retained something of that extraordinary gift of song which marks the Elizabethan period; but it was gradually dying away. Already the secret of 'Marlowe's mighty line' was being forgotten; verse was becoming looser and weaker. A little later we find plays disfigured by the merest doggerel, unworthy of the name of blank verse at all. The later dramatists—Massinger, Ford, Tourneur and Webster—have lost the grip of true tragedy. They are unable to hold the attention by the force of strongly drawn characters, and they endeavour to make up for this failure either by reviving the old historical plays on the model of Shakespeare's earlier ones, or by reverting to all the 'horror and the hell' of the Marlovian tragedy. The materials for this they get in abundance from Italy, whose fearful annals of lust and crime and madness (so little reflected in her own

[1] *Age of Elizabeth*, p. 108.

delicate, languid literature) exercised a sinister fascination over the minds of English dramatists. Of those just mentioned Webster undoubtedly far excels the others in fire and imagination; but his is the fantastic genius of a decadent style, the genius that shows itself in weird devices for exciting emotion (such as the dance of maniacs in the 'Duchess of Malfi') and in depicting strange and terrible sins, or in strained, unnatural, but most striking situations.

In comedy, much as Ben Jonson was admired, his lead was not followed. We hear little more of 'humours,' and the 'Comedy of Manners' takes possession of the stage.

National drama in Spain

Spain was the only country besides England which at this time produced a thoroughly national drama. We have very few specimens of Spanish plays written before the end of the fifteenth century; but it is probable that while religious plays were no less popular here than elsewhere, and were equally diversified by buffoonery, the comic element did not separate off and form a distinct species of play, like the French and Italian farces. In this, as in every branch of Spanish art, the eye of the Church was vigilant and its arm was strong. Even in the time of its highest development, which was not until the beginning of the seventeenth century (when the national glory was already fading), the Theatre was more closely than ever associated with the Church.

Late in the fifteenth century an impetus was given to the formation of a drama by the appearance of a dramatic story entitled 'La Celestina,' or, as it is sometimes called, 'Calisto and Melibœa.' This was far too long for repre-

sentation, consisting as it did of about twenty-one acts; but it seems to contain all the elements of popular drama—easy, spirited dialogue, well-developed characters, and an intricate and sanguinary plot. 'La Celestina' passed through a large number of editions, and was translated into almost every language of Europe. It was, naturally, much imitated, and parts of it were adapted for the stage by later writers.

Juan de la Enzina has the credit of being the founder of the secular theatre in Spain. A skilled musician, his post as head of Leo X.'s chapel at Rome would inevitably bring him in contact with the Renaissance in its full development. Some of his 'Eclogues,' as he calls them, were, however, written before he left Spain, and in none of them is there much trace of the modern spirit. Some of them are only religious dialogues, and though in others there is some sort of a romantic story, he seems to have had little idea of a properly constructed plot; nor is there much more that is modern in the plays of his disciple, Gil Vicente, a Portuguese, who wrote in Spanish several courtly plays to be presented before the King (Manuel of Portugal). A more decided step forward was taken by Torres Naharro, who had spent much time in Italy, and had learnt some useful lessons from the beginnings of the drama there. While he shows no desire to emulate classic strictness, he divides his plays into 'Jornadas,' corresponding to acts, and shows more consistency and constructive power than any of his predecessors. But still, considering his Italian training, one is disappointed to find so much that is mediæval in his plays. It is only one, the

Juan de la Enzina

Gil Vicente, 1502-1536

Naharro

'Hymenea,' that, with its intriguing plot and the character of its incidents and *dramatis personæ*, really foreshadows the future theatre. Naharro's plays were soon forbidden by the Inquisition, for the Church had no mind to let so useful an instrument as the Drama slip away from her control. Indeed, many of the plays which were produced during the years that followed are only known to us from the 'Index Expurgatorius.' But at last a brave and vigorous effort was made to free the stage from ecclesiastical domination, and to popularise it. The man who did this

Lope de Rueda

was Lope de Rueda, who began life as a mechanic at Seville, but soon followed his strong natural bent for the stage, and set up, along with his friend Timoneda, the bookseller, as a dramatist and the manager of a strolling company. There is no doubt that the young man was an extremely clever comedian, able both to write and to speak spirited racy dialogue and to conceive amusing situations. Appreciative audiences soon gathered round the little company, wherever in the streets and squares of the towns they set up their primitive stage. How primitive and simple this was is well described by Cervantes. He says, that in the time of Lope, 'the whole apparatus of a manager was contained in a large sack, and consisted of four white shepherds' jackets, turned up with leather, gilt and stamped; four beards and false sets of hanging locks, and four shepherds' crooks, more or less. The plays were colloquies, like eclogues, between two or three shepherds and one shepherdess, fitted up and extended with two or three interludes whose personages were sometimes a negress, sometimes a bully, sometimes a fool, sometimes a Biscayan; for all these four parts and many

others Lope himself performed with the greatest excellence and skill that can be imagined. . . . The theatre was composed of four benches arranged in a square, with five or six boards laid across them that were thus raised about four palms from the ground. . . . The furniture of the theatre was an old blanket drawn aside by two cords, making what they call a tiring room, behind which were the musicians who sang old ballads without a guitar.' [1]

De Rueda who, as far as we can tell, was only twenty-three when he died, achieved unwonted success for so young a man. He so impressed his contemporaries that, though he had been but a gold-beater at first, and his later profession was one held in no great honour, he was buried in the nave of the cathedral at Cordova. Had he lived longer he would in all probability have definitely settled the form which the drama was to take in Spain; but his life was very short, the poverty of his arrangements made it impossible for him to reach any but the lower classes, and the few plays he left, in spite of their dramatic interest, their real humour, and their lively representations of every-day life, are brief and slight, and resemble the farce rather than the regular drama. After his death, though there was certainly a strengthened interest in plays among the people, yet the drama seemed to fall back into an uncertain and tentative condition, and the Church succeeded in getting the strolling companies of actors under her authority, so that they might only perform by her permission, and for the benefit of this or that brotherhood.

[1] Ticknor, *History of Spanish Literature*, vol. ii. p. 17.

But what Lope de Rueda had not weight enough to accomplish was achieved by his brilliant and powerful namesake, Lope de Vega, that wonderful man who, at the time when culture in Spain reached its zenith, was not so much a Spanish dramatist as the embodiment of the Spanish drama. His position as a dramatist is quite different from that of Shakespeare. His task was not to raise to perfection a drama which was already in existence, but practically to create one. He found it all chaotic and tentative, and he gave it a form and established it on a basis which were never afterwards materially changed. He set about his work in the same sort of instinctive way as his English contemporary. Shakespeare, as we know, was no pedant or scholar. The path which he followed was laid down for him by men of University education, who could probably have formulated a very much more correct theory of the drama than he. His glory lies in the fact that, by his intuitive genius, he was able to reach all that his predecessors were straining after. But, half unconscious though it was, it is this constructive power which, combined with his faculty for delineating character, gives their supreme literary value to all his plays. Lope, on the other hand, though he was not unacquainted with the canons of his art, cared little about applying them. His one purpose was to content and please the people, though 'the rules of art may be strangled thereby,' as he says, with good-humoured cynicism.[1] For delineation of character he cares nothing.

Lope de Vega, 1562-1635

[1] And again: 'I write according to the art invented by those who sought the applause of the multitude whom it is but just to humour in their folly since it is they who pay for it' (Ticknor, vol. ii. p. 224).

Various as are the personages who figure in his intrigues, they are mere masks—the lover, the heroine, and the brother or father jealous for her honour; the dialogue is not intended to reveal individuality, but to work out the elaborate plot. As for considerations of time or place, they are ignored; ancient and modern history jostle recklessly together, and geography is equally vague. But Lope knew his audience. He was, to use a modern phrase, a born caterer for the public. He knew that all they asked was to have their senses excited either to laughter or horror, to be thoroughly interested and thoroughly mystified, lest, as he says, 'having found out how it will end, they turn their faces to the door and their backs to the stage.' His eighteen hundred plays have, in consequence, little literary value. They are brilliant improvisations, scribbled down in less time than it would take a copyist to transcribe them. In order to estimate the achievement of their author, we must regard them, not as units, but as a whole. Then we shall see how, in spite of all their faults, they form a scintillating mass, in which all the life and vigour of the Spanish Renaissance are gathered up—its hopes for the future and its pride in the past; a mirror which faithfully reflects alike the ways of the common people, the loves and sorrows of the hidalgos, and the crimes and glories of their rulers; for there is no class of society which does not play its part upon this brilliant stage. His plays or *comedias*, as they are called—though they are not comedies in our sense of the word—group themselves into fairly well-defined classes. There are the *comedias de capa y espada*, whose hero is usually the hidalgo—the gentleman of Spain with his 'cloak and sword,' his proud fiery temper,

and his absurd devotion to the point of honour. It is upon the loves, the intrigues, the rivalries, and the revenges of this personage that the plays usually turn—intrigues frequently so complicated that it is to be feared a modern audience would hardly take the pains to unravel them. There is little difference between these plays and the *comedias heroicas*, except that, in the latter, the *dramatis personæ* are more exalted personages—frequently kings and queens—a fact which brought them into royal disfavour, as subversive of due reverence to the throne. The third kind of *comedia* is that of common life, where the incidents are taken from the lives of peasants, shepherds, and slaves.

At last the Church took fright at the freedom of the plays, which, under De Vega's leadership, were becoming so popular, and for a time they were prohibited altogether. Nothing daunted, the versatile genius of Lope turned to the Bible and the histories of the saints, from which he framed plays which offered no handle for ecclesiastical disapproval, and yet were not shorn of the lively incident and gross humour which delighted the people. He also turned to account the *Autos Sacramentales* or *Corpus Christi* plays, of which he is supposed to have written between three and four hundred. The *auto*, which formed the *finale* to a long day of pageants, processions, and mummeries, was under the special patronage of the Church, and professed to be of a religious character, but it admitted much that, from our point of view, seems distressingly irreverent and revolting. But Lope in this, as in every other direction, achieved the widest popularity. Kings and queens honoured him as well as the common people,

and no theatre could be furnished too sumptuously to do honour to the popular idol. His fame spread far beyond his own country, and even in France and Italy the announcement of his name (as author) was enough to fill a theatre. He obtained his power of touching the hearts of the people partly from the extreme versatility and sweetness of his verse, using now the statelier Italian measures that pleased the fashionable people, now the simple old *redondillas* and *quintillas* that were on the lips of every peasant, and again breaking into one of the old ballads which at an emotional moment, would sweep the very hearts of his audience away in a tide of irresistible enthusiasm. How the man found time, in addition to all this, to write his novels and his voluminous poems, as well as to superintend the burning of notable heretics for his masters of the Inquisition, will ever remain a puzzle to later and more puny generations. We can only say that he was one of the products of an age which, like an atmosphere surcharged with oxygen, produced extraordinary growths.

De Vega could not be so popular without producing a very large school of imitators, among the most notable of whom are Cervantes, Guevara, and Montalvan.

The School of Lope:

Cervantes, 1547-1616

Cervantes, indeed, began to write for the stage before Lope; but neither in his early plays, when he had the field to himself, nor in those of his later years, when he was content to follow in the footsteps of the 'monarch of the stage,' does he show any strong dramatic power. Only in a few isolated scenes, such as those drawn from his own bitter experiences in Algiers, do his originality and genius appear; of the mechanism of a

play he seems to have had little conception. Some of his scenes were introduced by Lope into his own dramas with considerable effect. Guevara had better learnt the lesson, and produced some good plays marked by the passionate, melancholy sweetness which we find in the highest Spanish literature. Montalvan implicitly followed the lead of Lope, and became one of the most popular of dramatists. Thus, in spite of the intermittent opposition of the Church and critical disapproval of many of the learned, who would have preferred a drama on the classical model, or at least something saner and less extravagant, the school of Lope continued to flourish. At the time of his death there was, moreover, already a rival in the same field, of higher if less prodigious genius. This was Calderon, who, for another fifty years, sustained the high repute of the Spanish stage. Calderon made few alterations in the form of the drama which Lope had fixed in happy accordance with popular taste; but, possessing much higher poetical power, he infused into it a loftier, more exalted spirit. In his plays we find the strongest characteristics of the Spanish people idealised and pressed to the farthest point of probability—their romantic chivalry, their passionate loyalty and patriotism, their ardent love, their intense melancholy. His poetry is always rich, marked by passages of glowing colour, and of utmost tenderness. The loftiness of his imagination, while it gives a stately impressive air to his plays, sometimes makes them seem stilted and unnatural, while the personages become more than ever mere mouthpieces for the author's glowing eloquence, mere puppets tossed in a storm of wild adventures.

Guevara

Montalvan

Calderon, 1600-1681

Calderon uses the comic relief that Lope invented, the *gracioso*, who is usually the servant of the hero, and enlivens the piece with buffoonery, parodying his master's love affairs in his own. The curiously perverted idea of honour, which permeates all Spanish literature of this period, becomes yet more grotesquely exaggerated in Calderon's plays than in those of his predecessors.

Powerful and brilliant as the drama became in his hands, it could not escape the domination of the Church; the religious element was as strong as ever. Indeed, when we remember the relentless power of the Inquisition, and its unceasing hostility to the stage, it is evident that nothing less than the determined support of the whole nation could have saved the drama from extinction. As it was, the authors were driven to evasions and compromises in order to appease the ecclesiastical authorities without interfering with the pleasures of the people. The *autos sacramentales* were more and more developed, and were celebrated with as much elaborate pageantry as the masque, from which they were only differentiated by their ostensibly religious character. Calderon wrote a great number of these *autos*, which, in their spiritual, mystical character, gave plenty of scope for his vivid imagination.

To sum up, the drama in Spain was, in a sense which applied to no other country, peculiarly national. The people would have nothing to do with the classical plays of Bermudez and Argensola, much as these were praised by a section of the learned. Both Lope and Calderon attained their immense popularity by carrying out the ideas of the people, developing them, indeed, but making no effort to train them in any other than their natural direction. And

it was the pleasure of this proud, conservative people that the drama should be altogether Spanish. They did not care about faithful representations of foreign scenes or foreign ways; faithful reproductions of bygone times. No matter who appeared on the scene—Greek or Roman, Biblical saint, or devil from hell—all must wear the Spanish dress and have a Spanish air. Again, all plays, religious or otherwise, were liberally enlivened with national ballads, and national dances (for the dance was a most important feature in the every-day life of Spain). Undoubtedly, however disadvantageous this unvarying national bias was to the drama from an artistic point of view, it was the only thing that could have saved it in the otherwise unequal struggle with the Inquisition. The people might respect and admire their Inquisition while they shuddered at it, but they loved their drama as themselves, and nothing could root it out of their hearts.

CHAPTER VI

THE RENAISSANCE IN ARCHITECTURE

In Architecture the historian of the Renaissance has not, as in almost every other department of human activity, to chronicle the awakening to greater and truer ideals and the discovery of better or more workmanlike methods. Here, for the only time, our keynote *Humanism* fails us, for it cannot be denied that in the cold correctness of Renaissance architecture there is less scope for the heart and brain of the individual worker than in the shaping of the irregular, imperfect, and often uncouth fragments of which are built up the rugged mighty piles that are still the glory of Christian Europe. It was in the raising of these great churches that the energy of the Middle Ages found its noblest expression; in them is crystallised the very spirit of the Christian religion. They are associated with no builder's name, but rose slowly through the centuries, soaring heavenwards with their 'misty masses of multitudinous pinnacle and diademed tower,' dim and mysterious with their vistas of column on column; records, not of individual enterprise and emulation, but of the faith and fear of a whole nation. For three centuries Gothic architecture dominated Europe, but in the last of these, the fifteenth, there were many

Gothic Architecture

evidences that its inspiring power (following the universal law that life must be followed by decay) was for a time exhausted, and that the age was ripe for a new system. This was the time of French Flamboyant and of our late Perpendicular, when ornament was crowded on ornament, and feats of daring ingenuity were attempted with more regard for showy effect than for the old principle of sincerity in structure and ornamentation. From this over-luxuriance and degeneracy the Roman revival with its restraint and refinement seemed to provide a healthy reaction. It took place of course in Italy.

The position in Italy

Gothic architecture had never there become quite acclimatised. The mystic and the picturesque did not appeal to the positive Italian spirit, highly sensitive to beauty though it was. The Florentines especially, whose temper was above everything intellectual, loved beauty of the majestic, orderly type—the beauty of symmetry and proportion. The picturesque irregularity which is the charm of pointed architecture, offended their eyes. They could not forget the splendid fragments of ancient buildings that lay about them, and which, as we may see in the works of Niccola Pisano, the great exponent of Gothic architecture to the Italians, strongly influenced their designs. Hence the Italians had retained many features which made the revival of classic style a much less abrupt change than it was north of the Alps. They had always shown a strong preference for horizontal lines, not caring to break up the skyline by the multitude of pinnacles, gables, towers, pointed roofs, and dormer windows devised for that purpose by the northern builders. Their buildings were

altogether more simple and regular in plan; low, round arches were still used, and colonnades of pilasters; large wall spaces were left for decoration by mosaic or fresco; the characteristic buttress was rarely seen, and the northern tower or spire had been replaced by the dome and the *campanile*—the tall slim bell tower, of which Giotto's masterpiece is the great example, the 'lily of Florence,' which soars quivering into the sunshine, bright with its pink and white marbles, delicate as ivory work in its carving. It was only the Venetians, always so much more passionate and vivid in temperament than the Florentines, who really appreciated Gothic architecture. They invested it with their own Oriental love of sumptuous colour; veiling it with delicate marbles, porphyry, and alabaster, and enriching it with mosaic and fresco. The magnificent palace of the Doges is the finest of all secular Gothic buildings, while the palaces whose richly carved balconies overhang the Grand Canal show, as nothing in Feudal countries could, of what perfect adaptation to domestic uses the Gothic style is capable.

in Venice

Rome lagged far behind in architecture as in the other arts, no public building of any importance being erected during the Gothic period. Her nobles were too poor and quarrelsome and ignorant to care about improving the city; her priests had already buildings enough and to spare for their own needs; while the populace was a mere factious rabble, whose only patriotism was a vague reliance upon the tradition of departed glory. It was the burgher class, the 'shopkeepers,' of Florence that made the great Guelf city what she was, the most cultivated in the whole world;

Rome

and Florence

and it was under the auspices of the Guild of the Woollen Merchants that the first of Renaissance architects came into prominence.

The majestic Gothic cathedral of Florence, S. Maria del Fiore, was designed and built by Arnolfo del Cambio, the chief Florentine architect of the thirteenth century, who also built the famous Palazzo Vecchio, the walls of the city, and the church of Santa Croce. But Arnolfo did not live long enough to crown his church by placing upon the mighty octagon, where nave and transepts met, the dome he had designed. For a hundred years it remained unfinished, no one daring to attempt so great a feat, until at last, in 1420, it was intrusted to Brunelleschi, the young Florentine architect, who crowned it with the huge dome, so grand in its simplicity, which now, side by side with Giotto's campanile, towers over Florence. Brunelleschi had made this task the main object of his studies among the ancient buildings at Rome, and he had returned to Florence so thoroughly imbued with the classical spirit that he was able, as if by instinct, to solve as well as it ever could be solved the problem of adapting the ancient Roman style to modern requirements. It was not a very simple question, for the extant examples of Roman building, consisting chiefly of baths, theatres, triumphal arches and so forth, were not well adapted to buildings intended for domestic or ecclesiastical purposes. It is from the effort to combine the two that some of the inconsistencies of Renaissance architecture arise, so that we find façades of palaces which in their symmetrical balance have little connection with the arrangement of the rooms behind them, and we find purely

Brunelleschi, 1377-1446

Roman features introduced which have nothing but their classicism to recommend them for the purposes to which they are applied. Alberti, for instance, who built the Rucellai Palace, and seconded Brunelleschi's efforts by his writings as well as by his designs, formed the front of his church of S. Andrea at Mantua of a huge Roman triumphal arch. When we remember the intense fascination which antiquity exercised on the minds of the Italians in the fifteenth century it will readily be understood how warmly this revival was welcomed, Gothic architecture being entirely forsaken. Enthusiastic disciples of the new style were ready, like the Humanists, to adopt anything and everything that was classic with more ardour than discretion.

Alberti, 1405-1472

Taking the two styles at their best, we may briefly state the more striking differences between them somewhat as follows. The mediæval building has grown up in a simple natural way, controlled by few laws, subject to the conception of no ruling brain, but adapting itself to the requirements of one builder after another. Here a room has been added, there a turret thrown up; if a window or a buttress were needed one has been opened out or built, all with little regard to external uniformity. And yet, so easy and flexible is the Gothic style, that all these irregularities blend together to add to the charm and interest of the whole. The pointed arch, with its rich foliation and its thousands of variations, is everywhere to be found, and the roof-mask that protects it is, in true Gothic, always gabled. The decoration is still more untrammelled than the general plan; each master-carver

Some differences between Gothic and Renaissance Architecture

works much as the whim takes him—this one liking to chisel out a hawthorn bough or a lily in minute imitation of nature, that one throwing all his simple homely wit into the shaping of a grotesque. From this freedom spring the countless surprises of a great Gothic building, every nook and corner containing something new and interesting.

In the classic style all this irregularity and luxuriance disappear. The first consideration is that the completed building shall present a stately, massive appearance, rising in the noble simplicity of a few grand, well-proportioned masses, side corresponding to side, and opening to opening, with unerring symmetry, the whole having the unity that comes of its being the conception of a single brain. The pliant pointed arch gives place to the dignified immobility of, first, the Roman (semi-circular headed) arch, and then the Greek architrave, the straight stone thrown across the columns. The classic orders are revived, and the pediment takes the place of the gable. Towers and spires are condemned as too violent, and give place to smoothly swelling domes, while the interior is no longer dim and mysterious, but mapped out in large bays. The carver may not work his will on the precious marbles that now veil the walls, for all the decoration is the design of an artist, carried out by trained workmen who follow his orders with the precision of machines. Capital must correspond to capital, and the workman must keep his idiosyncrasies in the background. Although it thus loses in interest and fertility, the charm of Renaissance architecture lies in its decoration—in the delicacy and refinement of the lightly cut reliefs, and in

the general restraint and dignity of the ornament. All is subdued and flat, for there is no need, in the sunny land where this style originated, for the deep-cut mouldings and high reliefs that give light and shade in countries where the light is weak.

It is easy to see how narrow is the dividing line that separates this grand simplicity from mere ugly baldness; and it is true that, as Mr. Ruskin says, Renaissance architecture 'has conducted men's inventive and constructive faculties from the Grand Canal to Gower Street.' But if we would understand what the buildings were that so captivated the taste of a beauty-loving race, we must not look at the brick walls of London, whether they call themselves Renaissance or not; we must turn to the fairy palaces of the Grand Canal, to the stately country homes of Italian citizens, and, above all, to the churches built in the fifteenth and early sixteenth centuries in Lombardy, Tuscany, and Rome. The flat walls then are seen to be no longer bare, but glowing with the paintings of a Raphael or a Correggio, gleaming with mosaic and with tinted marble, rich with sculptured galleries by a Donatello, or reliefs by a Della Robbia, to say nothing of the work of the unknown carvers in the wealth of scrolls and friezes, and pilasters of acanthus work; of the workers in bronze and gold for gates and lamps, vessels and candlesticks. The architect had not in the early years of the Renaissance separated himself from the other craftsmen (for they were all craftsmen then). His was the directing intelligence, but with him worked harmoniously the sculptor, the painter, the carver, and the goldsmith, all on the same level. Indeed all these arts were frequently united in

one man; and the same great artist would be equally ready to paint a fresco or an altar-piece, to build a cathedral, to carve a tomb, and to engrave a candlestick. Brunelleschi, Botticelli, Orcagna, Ghiberti, Ghirlandajo, Cellini, and other famous artists, were trained first in the goldsmith's craft. Perugino, Ghirlandajo, and Gentile, kept open shops for the sale of their wares. Michael Angelo is equally famous as painter, sculptor, and architect. Raphael built the Palazzo Vidoni and the Palazzo Pandolfini.

If the early Renaissance architecture, remembering, perhaps, the old Gothic luxuriance, had a tendency to become over-florid and voluptuous, this desire was sternly checked by Bramante, the most scientific of Renaissance architects, who exerted all his influence on the side of refinement, and the due subordination of the decoration to the general scheme. Bramante is best known to fame as the first architect of St. Peter's, the foundation stone of which was laid according to his designs by Pope Julius II. in 1506. Bramante only lived to work for eight years upon the building, and after his death it passed through the hands of several successive architects, including Raphael and Giulio Romano, several of whom made serious alterations in the plans. At last, in 1535, it was entrusted to Michael Angelo, who reverted to the original designs, and raised the church as far as the drum of the great dome, which, after his death, was completed according to his model. It was not until 1626 that this vast edifice, the most important building of the Renaissance, was finished and consecrated. Michael Angelo worked in a bolder and more picturesque style

Bramante, 1444-1514

St. Peter's

Michael Angelo, 1475-1564

than the other great architects of the mature Renaissance, retaining the use of columns, which the others were giving up for pilasters, and showing greater freedom and breadth in the details of his decoration. His influence (which in architecture, as in other arts, was generally misleading on account of his inimitable originality) was more felt in France than in Italy, and appears in the work of De l'Orme and Lescot. Another famous building of this period is the beautiful and stately Library of St. Mark at Venice, 1536, where Sanzovino has united true classic feeling with the splendour and beauty that the Venetians loved.

Sanzovino, 1477-1570

In the latter half of the sixteenth century Italian architecture felt the influence of the chilling spirit of formalism and pedantry, which, in art as in letters, was cramping and benumbing all the vigorous originality of the Renaissance. Architecture withdrew itself in cold austerity from the help of the sister arts. The mosaics, the tinted marbles, even the frescoes of great painters were refused; the only decoration (if such it can be called) that is admitted is *rustication* or channelling of the stones. The cold bare walls rise alone, relying upon their scientific perfection and the appreciation of the learned. Over-refinement and the suppression of individual energy then, as always, were accompanied by languor. Two great architects belonged to this period, however, who, by reducing to a written science the principles that governed Renaissance Architecture, and so enabling the builders to understand and apply them, strongly influenced its course in Northern Europe. These are Vignola, the architect of the Farnese Palace, who worked in France for Francis I.,

Decline of Architecture

and Palladio, who, more by his writings than his example, assisted the English architects of the Renaissance, Inigo Jones and Christopher Wren.

Pure classic architecture made but little progress north of the Alps during the period with which we are concerned. It was too hard and unsympathetic in its cold correctness to satisfy the eyes of races that were carried away by a rush of new interests and new pleasure. The decorative arts upon which so much of its charm depends, were far less practised in the North, and in any case were ill-suited for use in damp, foggy climates. But though the people of the North might rest content in the superiority of their churches, they were conscious that they had much to learn in the sphere of domestic architecture. We have already noticed how, in the fourteenth and even the fifteenth century, while the bankers and merchants of Italy could retire to their comfortable country houses, sunny and yet cool, with spacious rooms and cloistered courts, where fountains plashed and flowers grew, rich with tapestries and frescoes and inlaid work, pleasant with lawns and terraces and vineyards, the northern gentry were still shut up in feudal castles, bare, frowning, and comfortless, having every provision for defence against the enemy, but very little for the home life of the family. The rooms were few and large, all conditions of men herding together in the great halls, so that there was but little opportunity for the privacy and quiet retirement which are necessary conditions for any degree of culture. For the great host of servants no decent provision in the way of sleeping accommodation was made; they bestowed themselves among the cellars as best they might.

Architecture north of the Alps

But with the decay of the Feudal System, and the cessation of civil strife, a desire was felt for homes better adapted for the increasingly complex necessities of social life. The old defences were therefore gradually abandoned; indeed, most of them were already rendered obsolete by the invention of gunpowder; and stately commodious manor-houses and *châteaux* were erected, in which, while (as in Haddon Hall and Chambord) the great halls for state and other public purposes were retained, smaller rooms, galleries, private staircases and terraces were added to suit the private occupations and amusements of the inhabitants. The style which prevailed in France and England during the sixteenth century, and which appeared in Germany hardly before the seventeenth, was not pure Renaissance but Transitional; *i.e.* while the main structure of the buildings remains Gothic, and while pointed roofs and other picturesque features are retained, the Italian style is followed in the increased convenience and luxury of the arrangements and in the decoration. Flat delicate surface patterns, arabesques, and bas-reliefs, take the place of bold mouldings; pilasters and arcades are much used, and the defiant battlement becomes a cornice, or disappears altogether.

The Revival in France

In France the architects of Touraine where, for some years, the Court had been established, and where there were especial opportunities for intercourse with the Italians, were the first to introduce the new style. Among the *châteaux* which they built in the Valley of the Loire, at the beginning of the sixteenth century, were the famous Bloix, Chenonceau, and Chambord; palaces which, in their wild luxuriance, must, as they left the hand of the master-builder, have looked like

enchanted creations called into being by a magician's wand, rather than substantial dwelling-houses. It was not, of course, from the Italians that these builders learnt to crowd ornament on ornament, flashing up to the sky a hundred *tourelles*, cupolas, minarets, pinnacles, carved chimneys and sculptured dormers in grotesque caprice. This was the legacy of debased Gothic. And yet, may we not say that these early buildings, in their very lawlessness —their wayward mingling of old and new—and in their picturesque extravagance, mirror very faithfully the first exuberance of the Renaissance spirit on the hither side of the Alps? Later on, when with the accession of the dilettante King Francis I., a wave of enthusiasm for all that was Italian and classic swept over France, a somewhat more correct and sober style was introduced, and Paris instead of Touraine became the centre of activity. A superb pleasure-house was commenced in the Bois de Boulogne by the King's direction, where all the new ideas of brightness, airiness, and elegance were given full play in the covered galleries, the large windows, and the gay summerhouse. The ornamental tiles, friezes, and medallions in enamelled terra-cotta, were the work of Girolamo della Robbia. The year in which this building was commenced was that of the sack of Rome (1527), and Italian artists and scholars, driven out of the desolate city, were thankful to find a refuge in Paris, where Francis and his Court welcomed them with delight. Quite an Italian school was formed at Fontainebleau, where Vignola, Rosso, Primaticcio and Serlio were employed. For another important project of Francis, the rebuilding of the Louvre, a French architect was preferred, and in the south-west

portion of this building, with its two orders of pilasters, and its richly-carved attic (the work mainly of the great sculptor Jean Goujon), Lescot has left us a beautiful monument of the style of architecture, which is matured Renaissance, and yet is distinctively and characteristically French, not Italian. Other notable buildings of this period are the *château* of Écouen, built by Bullant, 'the last of the master-masons,' for the great Constable de Montmorency, who placed on either side of the gateway the famous *Captives* in white marble that Michael Angelo had given him; and the Tuileries, the foundations of which were laid in 1564 according to the magnificent ideas of Queen Catharine, and of which only the elaborate but stately centre pavilion was completed by De l'Orme its first architect, Bullant carrying on the work after his death. De l'Orme's individuality and his appreciation of classic dignity and restraint are better seen where, as in the huge *château* of Anet, which he built for Diane de Poitiers, he had a free hand, untrammelled by the commands of an imperious, luxurious Medicean Queen. As the century came to an end French architecture lost its originality and vigour, and became languidly Italianate. The distracted state of the country deprived it of royal patronage, and until the great outburst of building under Louis XIV., in the second half of the next century, little of importance was accomplished.

Lescot, 1510-1578

Bullant, 1515-1578

De l'Orme, c. 1510-1570

Renaissance architecture in Spain followed much the same development as in France. It was introduced during the latter part of the fifteenth century, and was characterised at first by the wild fantastic

In Spain

extravagance which there, even more than in France, was inherited from late Gothic. About the middle of the sixteenth century this exuberance gave place to a much more dignified and sober style, the crowning glory of which is the Escurial, built (1563) by Juan Baptista de Toledo. This is one of the most famous of Renaissance palaces, of vast size, crowned with a huge dome surrounded by many towers, and containing within its precincts an exquisitely decorated church. The much admired arcades of the Alcazar of Toledo were planned by the same architect. The Spaniards, like the English, even when they fully adopted the classic style, refused to abandon the use of towers and steeples.

Baptista de Toledo

The transitional style that came into vogue in England in the sixteenth century was far less fantastic than that of France or Spain, though its general features were somewhat the same. In 1512, Torregiano set up the thoroughly Italian tomb of Henry VII. in Westminster Abbey; but it was not until after the accession of Elizabeth that English architects began to employ the classic style, although a gradual change had long been softening the aspect of dwelling-houses. When the great building time came, and the nobles were hastening to exchange their fortified dungeons for comfortable mansions, a notable architect appeared in John Thorpe, who was associated with Jansen at Audley End, and built Longford Castle and other great houses. Though his style was far soberer than that of his French contemporaries, he, like every great man of that day, had his 'conceits,' and he was fond of employing some whimsical device for the form of his ground plan,

In England

John Thorpe

as the [1] which was to be the foundation of his own house.

The general type of Elizabethan houses is familiar enough. It is the type to which Sidney's home Penshurst, Knowle, Hardwicke, Hatfield, Longleat, and many lesser houses of the English aristocracy, belong. The gabled roofs and the large mullioned windows show their Gothic parentage, while the new influences appear in the grand staircases leading to the state apartments which, Italian fashion, are placed on the first floor; and in the terraces and flower-gardens. 'This style is characterised by a somewhat grotesque application of the ancient orders and ornaments, by large and picturesquely formed masses, spacious staircases, broad terraces, galleries of great length (at times a hundred feet long), orders placed on orders, pyramidal gables formed of scroll-work often pierced, large windows divided by mullions and transoms, bay windows, pierced parapets, angle turrets, and a love of arcades. The principal features in the ornament are pierced scroll-work, strap-work, and prismatic rustication combined with boldly carved foliage (usually conventional) and roughly-formed figures.' In the later Middle Ages English enterprise and activity had centred in the busy trading cities. These had reached the zenith of their independent self-reliant freedom in the fifteenth century, before the country was welded together in the iron grip of the Tudors.

Characteristics of English Transitional

[1] His drawing is thus explained in a note thereon:

'Thes two letters I and T,
Joyned together as you see,
Is ment a dwelling house for me.—JOHN THORPE.'

While the nobles were retaining the insanitary and inconvenient grandeur of their fortresses, the citizens had been busy paving the streets and building quays, bridges, harbours, markets, and other similar works, with an amount of public spirit and self-sacrificing zeal that excites our warmest admiration. Now, as the merchants increased in wealth and social dignity, they began to build for themselves houses which still, in their oak-panelled parlours, their oriel windows, and their fine old staircases, show, as far as time, and the uses of adversity will let them, the taste and refinement of their citizen owners. In the country, too, the wretched wattled dwellings which had sufficed for the farmers were replaced by picturesque houses, which, with their projecting gables and their half-timbered fronts, had no connection with the Italian revival, but show the influence of the new ideas of comfort and refinement. Not only in farm-houses was this timber-work employed, but in buildings of a more pretentious class; large houses were constructed entirely of timber-framing of intricate, well thought-out design. This was a Continental fashion; in fact many houses are said to have been actually made abroad, and then brought over and erected in this country, as *e.g.* that quaint and perfect specimen of timber and plaster work, the 'Dutch House' in Bristol, an edifice of no mean size, which is said to have been made in Holland.

Inigo Jones, 1573-1652

In public buildings, such as Caius College, Cambridge, a stricter adherence to classical principles was observed; but it remained for Inigo Jones, the great English architect of the century, to understand these principles thoroughly and interpret them

to his countrymen. Of him, in connection with the Renaissance of art in this country, it was said that 'England adopted Holbein and Van Dyck, borrowed Rubens, and produced Inigo Jones.' He had travelled much in Italy, and was influenced both by the Venetian school and the writings of Palladio. His most famous work was the superb design for the Palace at Whitehall, of which, however, he was only able to complete the Banqueting Hall. He was the pioneer of the classic style, but it was not exemplified in its purity in many buildings of importance until the time of Christopher Wren (*i.e.* the end of the seventeenth and the beginning of the eighteenth century). It was, of course, the Great Fire of London which gave Wren his unique opportunity, and he, quite a young man, had the energy and skill to cope with it. While he was thoroughly imbued with the classical spirit, and conversant with its principles, he was no slavish or pedantic follower of the Italians, but knew how to adapt classical precedent to English needs, not hesitating, for instance, to crown with towers and steeples the churches which, devoid of southern colour, would have seemed so flat and uninteresting without them. Besides his *magnum opus*, St. Paul's, which, in spite of its almost entire lack of decoration, is one of the most striking and finely planned Renaissance buildings in Europe, he was the architect of Greenwich Palace, Temple Bar, and many more of our most important architectural monuments.

Christopher Wren, 1632-1723

CHAPTER VII

THE RENAISSANCE IN SCULPTURE

Sculpture in the Middle Ages was entirely subordinated to architecture. For six centuries the dead weight of Byzantine tradition clung about it. The very nation which had once raised this art to a height which it can never reach again, became the centre whence there radiated such lifelessness and formality that the work of one century can scarcely be told from that of another. But with the introduction of pointed architecture, and all the new interest and luxuriance and vitality that accompanied it, a new spirit was breathed into sculpture, and during the thirteenth century it reached in England and France a degree of decorative excellence, of combined richness and delicacy, which it never again attained, even in the days of the Renaissance. But as Gothic architecture declined, so did the art that had veiled its massive strength with richly carved façades and noble friezes; it was only in Italy that the revived sculpture of the thirteenth century was the precursor of a great modern school. For the sculptures of Niccola Pisano (Italy's first great Gothic architect) are something more than a decorative treatment of architectural forms. They have caught something of the

Niccola Pisano, after 1200-1278

grand style of the ancients, and have become works of art in themselves. Many a Pisan carver before him had doubtless noticed, carelessly, the old worn sarcophagi now in the Campo Santo, which meant so much to him. He at last was gifted with insight to learn from them the gulf that separated the noble freedom of the antique from the stiff unnatural formality of the Byzantine style, with its long thin figures adapted to narrow Gothic niches; and not only the insight to perceive, but the strength to follow, the clue thus given to him. His Roman models were fortunately neither numerous nor perfect enough to seduce him into that slavish imitation of the antique which proved so fatal to later sculptors. He was a Christian sculptor with Christian ideas to carry out, and he saw that he must turn to nature, and to the study of the human form from living models, if he would catch the spirit and the skill of the ancients. In his first masterpiece, *The Deposition from the Cross*, the freedom and grace of the figures, and still more the unity of the grouping, show how far he had already left his predecessors behind. His work, of which the pulpit at Pisa is the most famous example and exercised the strongest influence, was hailed with enthusiasm by his contemporaries, who, with Tuscan quickness of apprehension, felt at once the superiority of the new and more living style. Niccola founded a school which maintained his traditions, and spread them through Italy, preparing the way for the great sculptors of the fifteenth century. In the work of his son Giovanni there is less of the coldness and caution that might have interfered with the success of Niccola's revival, and more of the fire and intensity that be-

Giovanni Pisano, c. 1240-1320

long to Gothic art. If Niccola seems timid, because he is newly learning restraint from the antique, Giovanni unites dignity with wealth of fancy and force of temper, and so made a stronger impression on his contemporaries.

We must leave this early school of sculptors with a brief mention of its two most important exponents—Andrea Pisano, who, under Giotto's direction, made statues for S. Maria del Fiore, and whose carving in the first gate of the Baptistery, with all its new simplicity, shows already the delicate and pictorial character that was to dominate Renaissance sculpture—and Orcagna, who, beginning life as a goldsmith, achieved a triumph of architectural sculpture in his tabernacle of Orsammichele (a beautiful shrine, covered with bas-reliefs in white marble, intaglios, mosaics, and enamels, built to enclose a famous picture of the Virgin), and we must pass on to the year 1400, the most memorable date in the story of Renaissance sculpture. This was the year in which the Signory of Florence issued a public invitation to the sculptors of Italy to complete the great bronze gates of the Baptistery, of which Andrea had carved the first. The event is memorable, because, among the seven who were chosen to prepare a trial subject in bronze, were three of the four greatest sculptors of the century—Ghiberti, Brunelleschi, and Della Quercia—while it is said that the young Donatello, who completes the great quartet, was consulted by the judges as to the merits of the proofs. That of Della Quercia was one of the first to be thrown out, although, judging by the strength and simplicity of his extant work, he was more faithful to the true principles

Andrea Pisano, c. 1274–c. 1349

Orcagna, d. 1369

Della Quercia, 1374-1438

of sculpture than either of his rivals. Brunelleschi's design suffered from a lack of harmony and repose, while Ghiberti's, if it had any defect, had that of its quality, an over-refinement and smoothness of execution. Brunelleschi chivalrously retired from the contest, and both the second and the third gates were completed by Ghiberti. In these gates, which are so beautiful that Michael Angelo said they might well be called the Gates of Paradise, the marvellous delicacy and beauty of Ghiberti's art are fully displayed. He had been trained as a goldsmith, and had also practised painting, and in his carving he seems to have retained something of the spirit of both these arts. Although he had the most loving and reverent appreciation of classic work, he abandoned the old principle that perspective has no place in sculpture, and set his figures in backgrounds of architecture and landscape, which almost give his reliefs the appearance of paintings in bronze. In the hands of followers who lacked the master's genius, this was a practice that led to very inartistic results. The confusion that existed in the popular mind at that time between the sculptor and the architect is well shown by the insistence of the Florentines that, because Ghiberti carved so exquisitely, he should assist Brunelleschi in the construction of the great dome of S. Maria, an architectural feat which Ghiberti was wholly unqualified even to attempt, and which the other was perfectly capable of completing alone.

Ghiberti, 1378-1455

Donatello was a sculptor of a more heroic temper than Ghiberti, sharing the daring spirit and the strong individuality of his friend Brunelleschi. With the latter he

travelled to Rome, and the two gave themselves up with ardent devotion to the study of ancient monuments. The irresistible fascination which antiquity exercised in the fifteenth century over the artists as well as the scholars, is well illustrated by a little incident which occurred after their return from Rome, when Brunelleschi happening one day to hear Donatello talking to other young sculptors, on the Piazza of S. Maria del Fiore, about a beautiful piece of ancient sculpture which he had seen at Cortona, set off, as he was, without a word to anyone, and walked there and back to do homage to the recovered treasure. Both these men were no less enthusiastic seekers after truth, eagerly studying the living human form, and even—a far more difficult task in those days than now—learning the secrets of its construction by dissecting it after death, even though they were driven to obtain subjects by rifling the gibbet or the grave. The force of this reaction naturally led to the error of a too close adherence to the model. The story is well known of Donatello's youthful pride in a crucifix he had carved with extreme care, following every muscle of the Tuscan lad who posed for him, and how this pride was dashed when Brunelleschi disparagingly, but truly, told him that he had represented no Christ, but a crucified peasant. It led, too, to the severe and painful realism, out of place in sculpture, which appears in Donatello's *Magdalen* and *Baptist*, and in much of Pollajuolo's work. The bronze *David* and the marble *St. George* are the noblest examples from Donatello's chisel, and show the beauty and grace which this great sculptor had learnt from the ancients, sublimed by a spiritual force to which they never

Donatello, 1386-1466

LIBRARY MINNEAPOLIS

attained. As a master of relief, noble in its simplicity while showing the highest skill in its gradation, Donatello exercised a great influence on Renaissance ornament.

Andrea Verocchio, who is best known to us by his influence over Lionardo da Vinci, and by the magnificent equestrian statue of Bartolommeo Colleoni which was mainly his work, was a pupil of Donatello, and shared the energy and realism of his master, if he lacked his genius. It needed all their vigour to counteract the tendency of early Renaissance sculpture to over-refinement. The early Tuscan sculptors loved to carve in very low relief, worked in fine gradations that can scarcely be appreciated except by the touch. This delicacy appears at its noblest in the work of Luca della Robbia. Nothing can rival for pure sweetness and for buoyant innocent grace, weakened by no touch of effeminacy, those lovely groups of singing and dancing children which he carved in marble for the organ gallery of S. Maria del Fiore. Wearying of transferring his delicate spiritual conceptions to the hard marble, Luca set himself to discover a glaze that would preserve clay, and so invented the kind of terra-cotta work, with which his name is associated. As he rarely used any colours but white and pale blue, his work retained a simplicity and purity of character which was lost when his relatives, who carried on his method, added vivid colours to the clay. The same delicacy, refined to a more dangerous sweetness, appears in the work of Mino da Fiesole—dangerous, because with all its purity and true religious inspiration, it has a tendency to degenerate into insipidity. There is nothing

Verocchio, 1435-1488

Luca della Robbia, 1400-1482

insipid or monotonous, however, about the bust of Bishop Salutati carved by Mino for his tomb at Fiesole, in which all this sculptor's peculiar freshness and delicacy are shown united to a wonderfully vivid delineation of character.

Mino da Fiesole, 1431-1484

Much of the sculpture of the Renaissance is associated with tombs. We may instance the tomb of Benedict XI., by Giovanni Pisano, at Perugia, where the Pope lies in peaceful sleep while guardian spirits hold back the curtains that canopy his bed (a treatment that was initiated by Arnolfo di Cambio, and was to become extremely popular); the gloomy sepulchre of Sixtus IV. cast in bronze by Pollajuolo, with its strange sombre figures; the far sublimer monument of the young Cardinal di Portogallo, wherein Rossellino has represented the young man—the beauty of his vigorous manhood frozen into stillness—watched by angels who stand ready to conduct him to heaven; the exquisite sleeping figure of fair young Medea Colleoni, daughter of the famous general, which Antonio Amadeo carved at Bergamo; and the still more beautiful lady Ilaria, who lies, sculptured by Della Quercia, in Lucca Cathedral, a rare instance of ideal feminine loveliness in early sculpture. It was in these sleeping figures of the dead that early Renaissance sculpture reached its highest development. The revived classic architecture had little need of the sculptor's work, and the demand had not yet risen again for ideal statuary, such as the Greeks had produced; but, here, in the commemorative portraiture of the dead, it could find full scope. The splendour-loving Venetians heaped their great sepulchral monuments

Sepulchral Monuments

with worldly symbols, and surrounded them with pages, genii, and mailed knights, while the sleeping figure which should have been dominant is often carelessly and feebly carved. The French who, to the mediæval habit of dwelling on Death, added the Renaissance horror of it as that which snatched them from the joyous world they loved, treated their tombs in a morbid, semi-ironical way. For them there was no medium between the fulness of vigorous life and the ghastliness of the lifeless body; and so they often placed the two side by side, the living man in all the pride of life and the wealth of sumptuous clothing, and by his side the rigid shrouded corpse. But the Tuscan sculptors of the fifteenth century felt the full dignity of the Christian conception of Death, and they represent the sleeping body in an attitude of tranquil expectation. Their portraits are indeed realistic, and yet, even when the subject is commonplace, it is ennobled by the majesty of Death, and beautified by the extreme delicacy and loving minuteness of the handiwork.

Decline of Sculpture

By the close of the century the simplicity of the earlier masters who united classical tradition to Christian sentiment was giving place to the Neo-paganism of the sixteenth century. The researches of such unwearied collectors as the Medici had brought to light a great number of Greek as well as Roman sculptures. Just as Bembo sacrificed originality and depth to a formal imitation of ancient Rhetoric, so the sculptors, inspired by no higher ideal than the close imitation of Greek art, began to fill Italy with statues that 'have nothing Greek about them but their names, their nakedness, and their association with myths the significance whereof was never really

felt by the sculptors.' Greek sculpture had a soul, if it was not a very complex one. The beauty of youth and the strength of manhood had for the Greeks an almost spiritual significance; their statuary was closely connected with their religious worship. But when, in the general upheaval of moral ideas and loosening of old restraints, sculptors gave themselves up to the reproduction of beautiful or colossal human forms, having no spiritual or intellectual significance whatever, their work became frankly animal and sensual, and so debased. In fact it was not possible for men like Bandinelli to be as the Greeks were, and as they fondly imagined themselves to be, 'naked and not ashamed'; they could only be naked and shameless.

Sanzovino, Cellini, and Gian Bologna belong to this class; but their work is inspired by a higher genius, and approaches almost as near to the true Pagan ideal as Politian's songs. Sanzovino's work has the true Venetian spirit. That is to say, like the paintings of Paolo Veronese, it is highly decorative, voluptuous, non-religious, and fully conscious of its own beauty.

Sanzovino, 1477-1576

Gian Bologna, a sculptor who had great influence upon his generation both in England and in Germany, is best known by one exquisite production, the world-famed bronze *Mercury*. Benvenuto Cellini is in more ways than one typical of the Renaissance. In his comprehensive genius, his readiness to turn his hand to almost any bit of delicate workmanship, he illustrates its versatility. In his extraordinary character—a dissipated ruffian and a most devout Catholic—he illustrates the entire separation in Italy at this time between religion and morality—

Gian Bologna, 1524-1608

Benvenuto Cellini, 1500-1571

illustrates it the more significantly because among his contemporaries his really atrocious crimes seem to have aroused so little horror, and to have been accepted as the eccentricities of genius. Cellini was inspired by a sublime confidence in his own mental, moral, and artistic greatness, and firmly believed that the hand of God specially protected him in his career of rascaldom. He alternated the foulest murders with heavenly visions and ecstatic reveries, and he was convinced that, after his imprisonment in the castle of St. Angelo, where, for lack of other occupation, he read the Bible and prayed many prayers, a visible aureole surrounded his saintly brow. Francis I. was fascinated by his Italian devilry and his wonderful skill, and would have liked to keep him in Paris, but his spirit was too restless to stay long in any place. For Francis he made the famous great silver candelabra. Most of his work in France was for Fontainebleau, which, as we have seen, had become, under royal patronage, a veritable school of Italian art. Here was placed his colossal group of the Nymph, stag and hounds. But it was as a goldsmith rather than as a sculptor that he influenced French art, teaching elegance, grace, and the use of mythological subjects to the already skilful native school of goldworkers. Cellini's most famous work is his bronze *Perseus*, in which, in spite of its defects, there is crystallised all that was best and most spirited in the over-ripe art it represents. For Renaissance sculpture had already culminated in Michael Angelo, with the close of whose long life its story comes to an end.

Michael Angelo, though almost equally famous as architect and painter, was, by nature and by choice, a

sculptor—the one great sculptor the modern world has produced. He has but few of the characteristics we have considered as belonging to the Renaissance: he has not its hopefulness, its brilliant versatility, its insatiable interest in all the business and pleasure of the world. He stands alone, a rugged, solitary figure, towering over the scene like some great mountain which depends upon no charm of woodland, of green meadow, of music of brook or bird, but which awes by its majestic height, and fascinates by the simplicity of its grand outlines. We have not to measure Michael Angelo by his achievements, those Titanic fragments which but dimly reveal the master. Working as the servant of first one and then another greedy, inconsiderate patron, his life is one long story of thwarted endeavours, of disappointments, of intolerable humiliations, which turned his strength to bitterness, and made him hide the deep store of sweetness which is the secret of his power, under a harsh, austere manner. The pupil of Ghirlandajo, he became, while a mere lad, the protégé of Lorenzo the Magnificent, and studied among his collection of antiques in the garden of St. Mark's. For a time he felt the full influence of the classic style, and caught from it some of the breadth and majesty that went to make up his 'terrible manner.' But the bent of his mind was not towards Paganism. In revulsion from the moral degeneration of the society in which he lived, he turned to the mediæval piety, the uncompromising rectitude which he found in Dante, and in Dante's great successor, Savonarola. Besides the *Bacchus*, and the two *Cupids*, and a few other works of his early manhood, in most of which the pagan ideal is strongly

Michael Angelo, 1475-1564

modified by his own individuality, he produced very few classic statues. Of his early works it is the *Pietà*, the dead Christ in His mother's arms, carved when he was twenty-four, which, in its power, its dignity, and its pathos, gives the keynote of his style. Three great works occupied the middle and best portion of his life—the years between 1505 and 1534. These were the mausoleum of Julius II., the ceiling of the Sistine Chapel, and the Sacristy of S. Lorenzo at Florence. Of these it was only the painting, the one which was least congenial to him, at which he was allowed to work fairly uninterruptedly, and he completed it in an incredibly short time. The others were never finished. His work on the mausoleum dragged on through many weary years, and embittered the sculptor's life. He was set to work upon it by Julius II., the same wilful, domineering master who soon after dragged him off to paint the Sistine, whether he would or no. The ambitious Pontiff wished for a tomb that, for size and magnificence, should be the wonder of the world, and the task accorded well with the daring genius of the artist. The tomb, as Julius conceived it and Michael Angelo designed it, would have been too large to be contained in the old Church of St. Peter, and it was to enshrine it that the new Cathedral was undertaken. Michael Angelo went, full of interest, to Carrara to collect and choose the marbles, but after eight months spent in this toilsome work, he returned to Rome to find that his capricious patron had already changed his mind, and had temporarily abandoned the idea. This is not the place to tell the long story of the 'Tragedy of the Sepulchre,' of the vacillations of the Pope, and the imperious demands of

The Mausoleum

his successors, less ambitious for their predecessor's glory than their own; suffice it to say that, after the sculptor had been, as he complained, 'bound hand and foot to this tomb' for forty years, he had completed but two fragments of the colossal scheme, the 'mountain of marble covered with figures wrought in marble and bronze,' the two being the *Moses* and the *Captives*. The former is acknowledged to be the finest piece of thoughtful sculpture in the world; the latter, which were never finished because they were too large for the gradually diminished size of the tomb, reflect, in their hopeless struggle against inevitable fate, the mood of their creator. When Julius died, his successor, Leo X., with a brutal disregard for the artist and for art, which is almost incredible in a man of his pretensions to culture, called Michael Angelo off the tomb, and sent him to the marble quarries to obtain material for the façade of *S. Lorenzo* at Florence, and here nearly five fruitless years were wasted in preparation for a work which he was never able to complete. In 1521, Leo's brother Giulio de' Medici, afterwards Clement VII., set him to work to build the Sacristy of *S. Lorenzo*, for the reception of Medicean monuments. This was no congenial task for a man who loved his city with a personal devotion not to be appreciated by moderns—to glorify the memory of the men whom he recognised as her enslavers. But he had no option; and, indeed, the monument which he raised in those twelve sad years, while Rome was sacked, and Florence besieged (he himself superintending the construction of the fortifications, and labouring night and day in the defence of his city), was rather a monument to the lost greatness of Florence than to the proud Medici. True, he carved the two young dukes, the

The Sacristy

one spirited and graceful, the other brooding, oppressed by a weight of thought; but it is in the four recumbent figures beneath them that our interest centres, the figures which we call *Night* and *Day*, *Twilight* and *Dawn*. Here we can trace the conflict between the artist and the patriot; here we can see the sorrow, the bitterness, the shame, that were now the portion of the Beautiful City and of those who loved her. At the death of Clement, the last for the time of the great Medici, the sculptor flung down his tools and left Florence, never to return. Only two of the figures in the Chapel were finished, the rest shared the incompleteness of so much of Michael Angelo's work. This is a circumstance which is not altogether regretted by critics, and perhaps was not regretted by the sculptor himself, who always loved the fancy that it was a living spirit that he was disencumbering of its rocky veil. 'This incompleteness,' it has been said, 'is Michael Angelo's equivalent for colour in sculpture, it is his way of etherealising pure form, of relieving its hard realism, and communicating to it breath, pulsation, and the effect of life.' At the same time the *Pietà*, the *Moses*, and the *Night*, all show that, given leisure and opportunity, no one was more willing than he to give the highest finish to the marble. Michael Angelo was almost sixty now, but he had still thirty more years of life, in which he painted his tremendous *Last Judgment*, behind the altar in the Sistine Chapel, and in which he crowned St. Peter's with the miracle of its dome; and then, at last, he rested in an old age that was blessed with tranquillity, with world-wide honour that brought none of the old unreasonable demands, and with the sweet friendship of Vittoria Colonna. With him faded the glory

of Italian sculpture. Art had become as degenerate and emasculated as the society which produced it. No one was left to maintain the great traditions of the fifteenth century sculptors. Michael Angelo's own pupils and followers could only attempt to catch the terrible manner of the master by imitating and exaggerating the contorted attitudes and strained muscles in which his vehement emotions had found expression; but their feebleness could not be hidden by these devices, and so the influence of this great master proved no more beneficial to sculpture than it was to architecture.

Sculpture in France

Sculpture in France was influenced by the Italian Renaissance through the artists whom Francis gathered at Fontainebleau; but though, while impelled by the new enthusiasm for art, it produced in the sixteenth century a certain amount of work which is worth attention as illustrative of the time, it did not again reach the spirited native excellence of thirteenth century carving.

Michel Columbe, 1431-1514

The first notable sculptor of the Renaissance was Michel Columbe, who worked in the Cathedral of Tours, and erected in that town the *Fontaine de Beaume*, which, in its subtle simplicity and its symmetrical beauty, well deserves to be called a 'genuine blossom of the Renaissance.' As in Italy, it was for sepulchral monuments that sculpture was most in demand. Of tombs that belong to the first half of the century we may mention that of François, Duke of Brittany, by Columbe; and that of the children of Anne of Brittany, and the mausoleum of Louis XII. and Anne, by Jean Juste, whose work shows traces of his Italian origin. These early sculptures have the extreme delicacy

of touch that belongs to all French art of the time. The bas-reliefs are very low and fine, a mere ripple on the marble.

Goujon is the greatest French sculptor of the Renaissance; but even he never rose above the rank of the *Maître Maçon,* working under the orders of the architect; nor did he emancipate his art from its purely decorative and subordinate position. At Écouen, where he worked under Bullant, he was not only brought into contact with the best representatives of French Humanism, but he was able to study the splendid collection of art treasures which the great Constable de Montmorency had gathered together. It was this rich Prince to whom Henry II. gave Michael Angelo's *Captives,* to place on either side of his gateway. Here Goujon was able to drink in the classic and Italian inspiration which gave breadth and dignity to his work. But he was no copyist. He was true to the French instinct which gave him his sharp clean touch, his vivacity and refinement. Most of his best works were destroyed in the Revolution, and of those that are left some are torn from their places, and are therefore robbed of half their significance; the proportions are altered, the drapery becomes constrained and awkward, for they have been intended to correspond to special conditions which no longer exist. Almost all the rich decoration of the beautiful south-west angle of the Louvre, which Lescot built, is the work of Goujon. To show what he could do in more individual work we have the *Fontaine des Innocents,* a good deal damaged, but still showing that the skilled craftsman had something of the soul of a poet, and knew not only how to weave

Goujon, 1530?-1572

decorative lines and to dispose harmonious masses of light and shade, but to express a spiritual meaning. We have also the beautiful piece of statuary, originally the centre of a fountain in the Court of the Château of Anet (where much of this sculptor's best work was placed), which, in compliment to Diane de Poitiers, for whom the huge palace was built, represents *Diana and her dogs*. It is a dignified and beautiful piece of work, not too lofty to suit the purpose for which it was required and the lady whose portrait it is said to be, while in its mingling of elegance with a slight melancholy it is very typical of the French Renaissance. The sculptor is said to have become a Huguenot, and to have perished, chisel in hand, in the massacre of St. Bartholomew.

Pilon raised French sculpture to the highest of which it was capable in another direction. Without the nobility of Goujon, he possessed in full the delicate foreign grace, the combined *naïveté* and artificiality which we find in the literature of the *Pléiade*. He worked principally at the Royal tombs at St. Denis. These are triumphs of mingled statuary and architecture, classic in design, the portraits worked out with clear unerring insight. It was for the tomb of Henry II.—in fact, to hold the urn containing his heart—that his celebrated group *The Three Graces* was carved. The exquisite gracefulness and dainty beauty of these three figures, carved from one block of white marble, will always charm, and will keep us from dwelling unduly on its entire lack of nobility and true greatness.

Pilon, 1515?-1598

Sculpture in Germany, while it was not directly influenced by the Italian Renaissance until well on in

the sixteenth century, showed in the fifteenth a decided revival, especially in the cities of Nuremberg, Augsburg, and Lübeck. But the spirit of German art was too fantastic, too much inclined to push realism to the verge of the grotesque, to be in harmony with the principles of sculpture. It was a spirit that could express itself in wood better than in marble, and so we find that in these centuries the churches were filled with wooden pulpits, fonts, choir stalls, altars and reredoses that are marvels of fantastic ingenuity, carved with all the old lavish luxuriance that the Gothic masons loved. Trees, plants, animals, and figures grow together in wild profusion with a wonderful truth to nature, though they may disregard the rules of art. The woodwork is often gorgeously painted and gilded. Wolgemut, Dürer, and Adam Krafft were all skilful carvers in wood as well as in stone. The same characteristics of fancifulness and exuberance were carried into the higher branches of the art, as may be seen in the bronze sculptures of the great Vischer family of Nuremberg, which produced three generations of sculptors in the fifteenth and sixteenth centuries. Peter Vischer was one of the sculptors who carved the twenty-eight colossal figures that surround the tomb of the Emperor Maximilian at Innsbruck. Many others worked there with him, and the result is a monument of the art of the period, ranging from the nobility and grace of some of Vischer's statues to the grotesque realism of the carvers who represented the later Hapsburgs.

Sculpture in Germany

Peter Vischer, 1455-1529

The influence of Germany may be traced in much of the decorative sculpture of Spain during the fifteenth century,

in the elaborate naturalistic foliage, the plant and tree forms which were freely used in façades and porches.

Sculpture in Spain

But early in the sixteenth century the severer forms of classic sculpture were introduced by Torrigiano and other Italian artists, and the first exuberance was modified. There always remained, however, in Spanish sculpture of the Renaissance, even in its greatest exponents—Alonso Cano, Montañes, and Jordan —a strong element of the grandiose, a love for bright colour and gilding and for startling effects.

Such, briefly, was the achievement of the Renaissance in sculpture. Setting aside Michael Angelo, who cannot be called a representative of the Renaissance or any other limited period, it is evident that it was not in plastic art that modern life was to find full artistic expression. All that is mirrored in the placid marble should be serene and still, free from all disturbances of action and passion. And so it was well enough in the morning of life, when gods and goddesses were but the enbodiment of physical perfection, when to be beautiful was to have attained the highest good, to carve those forms of passionless perfect beauty, each the final expression of a simple idea, a type from which all that is accidental and transitory has been eliminated. But with Christianity art was confronted by the problem of dealing with thoughts that were no longer on its own level, but which even soared above the highest to which it could aspire; and so at once an element of unrest and striving is introduced. The Christian artist has to express sorrow, self-abnegation; he cannot always paint the young and fair, for to be good and great is no longer

The position of Sculpture in the Renaissance

incompatible with being worn and unlovely; and all this strife and austerity are inadmissible in sculpture. It is true that Michael Angelo represents vehement emotion most finely in the marble, but he was great enough to be a law unto himself. In the hands of his imitators and of all lesser craftsmen, the effort to express the transient and the violent in sculpture almost inevitably results in the grotesque. Again, it is impossible to represent religious subjects by the undraped form, and when sculpture leaves the nude, it strays at once into the domain of the more mobile art. It is evident that if modern thought with its complexity, its infinite range of emotion, is to be expressed in art, it needs all the resources of painting, the colour of the flushed cheek, the flashing eye, the subtle significance of drapery; it needs grouping, accessories, background; all these must combine to give the complete impression of the situation, or the act, which in a modern work of art has generally taken the place of the simple idea. It is only in the death-sleep that the restless nervous body in which the modern spirit is pent, is at last simple and tranquil, and only then is it a fitting subject for sculpture. In representing life, the sculptors who are most true to themselves, Donatello, Michael Angelo, Pollajuola and even Ghiberti, almost inevitably break the primary law that demands dignity and restraint in sculpture.

CHAPTER VIII

THE RENAISSANCE IN PAINTING

Section I.—In Italy

At last, in Painting, we reach the supreme achievement of the Italian Renaissance, Italy's one perfect gift to the world. We have seen how the spirit of the Italians was unconsciously dominated by pictorial ideas, how the sculptors carved pictures in marble and bronze, and how the poets and novelists vied with one another in vivid word-painting. Never before in the history of the world, and never again, could painting so completely sum up the characteristics of a period. All the new keen interest in Nature could show itself in loving imitation of her handiwork; all the new pomp and splendour of a rich and joyous life could be flashed out in the glory of glowing colour; all the newly-acquired dignity and importance of man himself could find expression in the careful study and triumphant delineation of the human form; all the new enthusiasm for antiquity could vent itself in illustrating the beautiful old myths of Hellas or the grandeur of ancient Rome. For *Humanism* in its widest sense is still our keynote. In

Painting the final expression of the Italian Renaissance

the old Byzantine figures, copied again and again by all the pious monks of Europe, there was little that was human, though undoubtedly there was sometimes an element of the divine, a spirit of devotion breathing through the uncouth forms, that is not to be found in the perfectly modelled men and women of the great masters. And to get these perfect forms the painters had to turn away from all the ascetic ideals of the Church, all the traditions of the schools, away even from their own naked bodies, vulgarised and distorted through generations of the wearing of heavy mediæval clothes, weakened and stunted from the toil of the factory or the workshop, and seek inspiration in the grand heroically modelled fragments of ancient sculpture which they found here and there, built into the walls of their churches or buried in the ground—mere battered fragments, and Roman rather than Greek—but each pregnant with meaning to those who, like the men of the Renaissance, had eyes to see.

In its general development the history of art in Italy resembles that of literature. At the end of the thirteenth century the gloom of the later Middle Ages is illumined by the genius of a few men who stand high above their fellows, like mountain peaks catching the first rays of the dawning sun long before his light has reached the level plain below. Then, as the influence of these men fades, there is a lull, followed in the fifteenth century by a time of experiment, of discovery, of acquisition, culminating at the end of the century and the beginning of the next in the full glory of a perfect art. We have seen how Niccola Pisano divined from Roman fragments the secret of the

Its beginnings in the thirteenth century

grand style, and pointed out the road that future art must take. Studying his work, and obeying his prompting, Cimabue and Giotto made their first steps along that road. Niccola died before the close of the thirteenth century, about ten years after that memorable day from which modern painting dates its existence—Cimabue's triumph day—when his Madonna was carried through the streets of Florence amid the welcoming shouts of the people, who called that quarter *Joyful* ever after. To our eyes, dazzled by the beauty of Raphael and the radiance of Correggio, it perhaps seems strangely antiquated—this stiff sad Madonna of the Rucellai. We hardly see at first wherein it differs from its mediæval predecessors. But the Florentines, with their wonderful instinct for excellence in art, saw in it as it came fresh from Cimabue's workshop, a tenderness, a touch of human feeling, a natural simplicity of gesture, that foretold to them a new era.

Cimabue, 1240?-1302?

Cimabue never wholly freed himself from mediæval methods. This was left for the sturdier genius of Giotto, the shepherd lad whom he took to work with him at the frescoes of the new church at Assisi. The revival of art at this time (the thirteenth century) was, to a considerable extent, the result of the cult of St. Francis, partly because the influence of that strong gracious personality infused a more human, more enthusiastic spirit into religion, making it seem less expressible by dead archaic forms, partly because the immense number of his followers caused the erection of innumerable monasteries and churches, chief of which was this great Gothic double church at Assisi. To decorate it, all the best painters of

Giotto, 1276-1337

the time were gathered together; and, Cimabue and Giotto being among them, this building became the cradle and school of the young Italian art. Giotto made his influence felt at once, so strong was his individuality, so inexhaustible his energy. With his homely common-sense and his genial good humour he sweeps like a refreshing wind through the cities of Italy, blowing away the cobwebs of old tradition, and leaving everywhere disciples eager to carry on his methods. His painting is still decorative, still the handmaid of architecture; he takes the space of wall the master builder allots to him (and what inspiriting great spaces they are!), attempts no illusions or disguises of the masonry, but patterns it out in clear flat designs. He still paints religious subjects (for an inspiration other than religious had scarcely been dreamed of in the domain of art), but he paints human beings drawn from the living model, who move and speak before us, and he clothes them in clear bright colours, and knows how to arrange them in groups that are pleasing to the eye. As Dante summed up the Middle Age—its religion, its philosophy, its thoughts of this life and the life to come—in his great poem, so is it summed up again in the paintings of the *Giotteschi*. Thoughts of the life to come especially occupy them: Death, Judgment, Hell, Heaven; the nightmares of the Middle Age and its hope.

The Giotteschi

Orcagna, the greatest of Giotto's followers, portrays in the Strozzi chapel at S. Maria Novella the *Inferno* and the *Paradiso* of Dante, and the unknown painter of the frescoes of the Campo Santo at Pisa depicts with passionate force the Renaissance horror of all-conquering Death. After this no further advance was made for

Orcagna. d. c. 1369

some years. Giotto had attained the highest that was attainable. His followers, instead of turning, as he had done, to nature and the antique, slavishly copied their master, and so inevitably fell back from his level.

Meanwhile the sculptors were at work. We have seen Donatello and Brunelleschi earnestly studying the human form, rifling graveyards and gibbets that they might probe the secrets of its structure, studying its proportions and the play of its muscles from the living model, and learning from fragments of old statues what it could be at its best. These sculptors were versatile men, we know, practising the goldsmith's art, carving, or painting, as they would; and so from them a new impulse came to painting.

Fresh impulse from Sculpture

The second period, the time of acquisition, dates from the beginning of the fifteenth century. The painters not only study the figure, but they learn the laws of composition, of chiaroscuro, of perspective, applying in long vistas of architectural or fantastic natural scenery the rules which Brunelleschi and Uccello had worked out; they feel their way to a new charm of vivid harmonious colour, they learn to suggest the textures of rich silken stuffs, the surfaces of jewels. In the excitement of these new discoveries they become naturalists, caring little what the object of their study may be in the delight of producing an exact representation of it. It becomes more important that their Christ should exactly reproduce the peasant lad who stretched out his arms as the model in their workshop, than that Divine compassion should be shown in His features. They cannot do everything at once, and at present they are fully occupied with the discovery of the

The period of acquisition

beauty of the world, the unsuspected loveliness of man and bird and insect, flower and woven robe. Still they paint religious subjects, but they are no longer interested in them as Giotto was. The ascetic faces of the saints give place to portraits of contemporary citizens, and angelic draperies to Florentine crimson and fur. 'Sodoma's cavalcade of gallantly dressed gentlemen' winds through Italian lanes 'with their hawks and hounds and negro jesters and apes and beautiful pages cantering along on short-necked little horses with silver bits and scarlet trappings, on the pretence of being the kings from the East, carrying gold and myrrh to the Infant Christ.'[1] It is the time of which Mr. Ruskin says that 'the masters no longer use their powers to show the objects of faith, but use the objects of faith to show their powers of painting.'[2] Finally, the religious pretence is thrown aside and the painters step out boldly on new untried paths, finding in the wealth of classic myth in which the fifteenth century is steeped, subjects in abundance for their brush, subjects instinct with the vigour of unabashed human nature, and luminous with the glow of a far-off golden age. Art throws off all that trammelled it and becomes free as air, free to express every mood of the painter's mind, everything that is beautiful, everything that is true, Christian or Pagan; in short:

Decline of the Religious Spirit

The world
The beauty and the wonder and the power,
The shapes of things, their colours, lights and shades,
Changes, surprises—for *God made it all.*[3]

---

[1] Vernon Lee, *Euphorion*, p. 21.
[2] *Stones of Venice*, vol. iii. p. 108.
[3] Browning, *Fra Lippo Lippi.*

The indifference of the Italians in religious matters made them blind to the danger that undoubtedly arose from their wayward confusion of Christian and Pagan subjects. For they 'brought Heaven down to earth, but at the cost of making men believe that earth itself was heavenly.'

The unnatural strain caused by the necessity to keep up the religious pretence when a man's whole soul was afire with the beauty of the world about him, is well shown in the story of Fra Lippo Lippi, the Florentine monk. To him the fascination of the world proved irresistible. His life was spent in falling out of one scrape into another, breaking his vows, escaping from windows, defying the restraining efforts alike of friend and enemy. And yet this lawless spirit, because he was a monk, and because he belonged to the first half of the fifteenth century, was set to paint the loftiest subjects of religious inspiration, a distasteful necessity which could not but degrade both himself and his art. It was only in such subjects as 'Salome dancing before Herod,' that he could rise to the best that was in him, luxuriating in rich colours and in the grace of moving limbs and fluttering draperies.

Lippo Lippi, 1412?-1469

Strange, indeed, is the contrast between wild Lippo Lippi, and that other monk Fra Angelico—the serene saint, withdrawn from the world, painting reverently in his quiet cell pictures which, wholly mediæval as they are in spirit, have a power to move us which is not less than Raphael's. Whether he is depicting—tears dimming his eyes as he works—the Passion of his Lord, or tender adoring angels bathed in the

Fra Angelico, 1387-1455

glory of the Beatific Vision, his pictures reflect the purity, the entire devotion of a soul as clear as crystal. All the buzz of the painters about anatomy, perspective, the beauty of nature, the beauty of the nude human body, was to him unintelligible or blasphemous jargon, from which his gentle spirit recoiled. He illustrates one side only of the Renaissance—its sensitiveness to and power of expressing ideal beauty. 'It seems,' says old Vasari, and one cannot improve on the criticism, 'as if blessed spirits could look no otherwise in Heaven—they are all so lifelike and so sweet.'

But Fra Angelico stands alone. He had nothing to give to his contemporaries, since he could not impart his saintliness. The man who, in this half of the century, did most to advance painting was Masaccio. His was one of those brief brilliant lives of which Renaissance history is so full, whose achievement makes us wonder what rank would have been too high for them, if they had lived to attain to it. In his short twenty-seven years he accomplished so much by the intuitive power of his genius, and anticipated with unerring foresight so many of the later technical perfections of his art, that his frescoes in the Brancacci Chapel became a school for all succeeding artists, Raphael and Michael Angelo not disdaining to study and learn from them.

Masaccio, 1402-1429

Not all the painters could take what they would of the diverse gifts of the Renaissance and ignore those for which they did not care. Sometimes the two influences, Pagan and Christian, meeting together, produce a jarring discord which will not be silenced. So it is with Botticelli. He feels all the yearning for Pagan fulness of

Botticelli, 1447-1510

life that gives passion to the fifteenth century; but he cannot free himself from the mediæval mysticism of Dante. A multitude of thronging questions perplex his mind, and his master Savonarola cannot answer all. And so he is filled with a vague unrest; striving always to find that perfect music which is reserved for Raphael, the music which shall combine, in one full, swelling strain, all that is sweetest in old and new. Modulating ever into minor keys, he finds many a tender pleasant melody, but he cannot be satisfied with less than the perfect harmony he seeks. This unrest is reflected in almost all his pictures. His strange querulous Venus seems to know that she can never be admitted into Olympus, for she has no kinship with the gods. His wistful men and women, unlike the simple Florentine folk of Ghirlandajo, seem to be ever trying vainly to give us the message that was in the painter's mind, to tell us what he meant but had not the skill to express. But the master was greater than he knew. For us his charm lies principally in the delicate refinement of his work and its quaint fanciful grace. He leaves it to Bennozzo Gozzoli and the other painters to set forth the pomp and pageantry of the rich busy life they loved, and he turns to small out-of-the-way things, the curved petals of a rose, the interlacing of white girlish fingers, questioning them for the secret of their beauty.

In Ghirlandajo, whose life just fills the second half of the century, is summed up all the tradition of the Tuscan school. He has at last attained to perfect command of all the technical excellencies that the past generation has spent itself in acquiring—composition, perspective, anatomy, and the rest. Dis-

Ghirlandajo, 1449-c. 1498

turbed by no dreams of the unattainable, by no unmanageable flights of the imagination, he paints coldly and correctly the things he sees, and leaves for us a valuable record of the Florence of his day. In art as in literature the time of experiment and acquisition is passing by, and the time of full achievement has come. The lessons have all been mastered. We have reached the last three decades of the century, the time of Lorenzo the Magnificent, of Politian and of Pulci. The masters whose work falls into these thirty years are Mantegna, Perugino, Fra Bartolommeo, Signorelli, and the Bellini. These painters are no longer oppressed by rules, by the anxiety to be correct. They have entered more fully into the meaning of the Antique. In the work of Mantegna, the scholar painter, the very spirit of ancient Rome seems to live again—Rome, in her most solemn and majestic mood, with all the pomp and circumstance of her triumphal processions, moving heavily with the wealth of rich spoils and the tramp of elephants; Rome with her grave priests, her citizens stately in flowing togas, her lithe slaves. If Ghiberti can be said to have carved pictures, Mantegna can with equal truth be said to have painted bas-reliefs, so strongly is the influence of the ancient friezes he has studied apparent in his work. Botticelli's dream of union is not yet realised. Mantegna is as wholly Pagan in thought and art, as Fra Angelico is Christian. In Signorelli's picture in the Uffizzi Gallery, where Madonna appears against a background of naked youths, the two elements are brought together without compromise on either side, but standing together in a strange peaceful propinquity, which does not appear to

Mantegna, 1431-1506

Signorelli, c. 1441-1523

have struck the men of that day as unnatural. To find the real blending of Christian spirit with classical perfection of form we must turn to the *Resurrection* by the same painter. Signorelli has been called the 'morning star of Michael Angelo,' so much does he anticipate the great master in his love of pure form and in his solitary daring. Like him he paints the terrible realities of the future life; like him he is altogether fascinated by the human form, weaving it into patterns, forming glowing dusky masses of naked bodies and flying limbs. He is never sensuous. He cares no more for golden hair and tinted cheeks and voluptuous outlines than he does for the green of leaves, the grace of flowers and the sheen of silk. Enough for him the play of strong muscles, the straining of wrestling sinewy limbs. He awes rather than attracts. And yet his young angels in their fair masculine beauty show that he was capable of a tenderer mood.

In the paintings of Raphael's teacher, Pietro Perugino, there is none of Signorelli's harshness, nor any obtrusive element of paganism. In his best pictures, painted before he fell from his early enthusiasm into a mercenary routine, religious art is carried to the highest pitch that consummate technical skill and a refined instinct for colour could reach. But the painter had known the bitterest pangs of poverty, and when he found that his graceful saints, with their sweet upturned faces, were profitable, he repeated them in picture after picture until grace degenerated into affectation and beauty into mere elegance. Perugino, in spite of the serene devotional aspect of his pictures, is one of the best examples of the business-like position of the Italian

Perugino, 1446-1524

painters, to which reference was made in the last chapter. He kept two shops, and had a large number of apprentices who painted with him, and caught so completely his method of producing sacred pictures that it is almost impossible to decide between his later works and those of his pupils.

Another painter who influenced and was influenced by Raphael was Fra Bartolommeo; a painter who, without great originality of conception, was inspired by a true religious spirit and a depth of conviction that give grandeur to his work. He was a disciple of Savonarola, a Piagnone, and for a while he renounced painting; but afterwards, encouraged by the great preacher, he resumed his brush and painted with a purely religious motive. From him the young Raphael was able to learn scientific skill in composition and richness of colouring.

Fra Bartolommeo, 1475-1517

With the sixteenth century begins the golden age of Italian painting; the time when Lionardo da Vinci, Raphael, Michael Angelo, Correggio, Andrea del Sarto, and the great Venetians, were giving to the world the pictures that are its school. Some of these masters were contemporaries of painters already mentioned, sundered from them not by time, but by the power of unerring achievement.

The Golden Age of Painting

The first in time of these is Lionardo da Vinci, who completely represents for us one side of the Renaissance—the return to nature. The other side, the classical revival, concerned him little. He could not urge the study of ancient models, for he fully appreciated how much of the formlessness and life-

Lionardo da Vinci, 1452-1519

lessness of mediæval art was the result of copying and re-copying certain established types. He insisted upon the direct study of Nature. Indeed he seems to have had an especial affinity with Nature, this man whom she had endowed with the perfection of every sense, as well as remarkable beauty of person, a voice of unusual power and sweetness, and a winning manner. And in return he made himself the 'servant and interpreter of Nature.' He knew and loved every bird and beast and flower, delighting to draw them with minutest care, and most of all he loved the human form. He was full of the spirit of inquiry, the vivid interest in all about him which characterises his time. His versatility is a proverb; not only was he one of the greatest of painters, but also a sculptor, an architect, an engineer, an accomplished musician and an inexhaustible inventor. He was skilled in poetry, and as a natural philosopher he anticipated many of the most important discoveries of later scientists. This scientific attitude of mind led him to a painstaking study, and thence to a perfect command of all the technical excellences of his art, the chemistry of colour, the laws of perspective and so forth. His achievement, however, was by no means commensurate with these extraordinary powers. He worked in too many fields to be entirely successful in any one. He was, besides, a man who could never be satisfied with anything less than perfection. Always following the highest, always mocked by that last elusive grace of which Marlowe sings, he constantly flings down his brushes in despair, because the vision that floats before his eyes so far excels its materialisation on his canvas. Or he stands for hours idle, waiting for the

instant of inspiration, scorning to work in a less exalted moment. Many of his best works have been lost to us; the greatest of all does indeed survive, but as a mere wreck, for the *Last Supper* (1497) was almost a ruin before the artist was dead. We must therefore not look for the master hand in the expression of the faces, nor in the colouring, for the picture has been often restored; it is in the pose of the figures and in the composition of the whole group, settling at last the long-vexed question how to represent a favourite subject of the Christian painter, that the picture is epoch-making. Lionardo earned some fame as a magician, no less from his scientific experiments than from his delight in things that were strange, weird, uncanny. He loved to draw ugly, wrinkled old faces, to devise grotesque monsters. In all these things he took a boyish interest, and it was undoubtedly his habit of minute observation that gave him his power as a portrait painter, teaching him to search for the faint lines and subtle modelling that give individuality to a face. For, if the grotesque fascinated him, there was no one who had a keener appreciation of beauty—the beauty of running water, the beauty of curled waving hair, and, most of all, the beauty of smiling lips. As a boy he loved to model smiling women's faces, and in that wonderful last picture of his, he has left Monua Lisa tantalising us for ever with that strange enigmatic smile, that lingers on her lips. Even Madonna in his pictures has lost her look of sad foreboding, and her sweet delicate face ripples with the happy laughter of the young mother who watches her little child at play. Both in his *St. John* and in the Madonnas, however, Lionardo illustrates the second period

in Renaissance art, when painting has become an end in itself, and the religious inspiration is no longer all in all to the artist.

The character of Raphael is far less complex—a soul and body beautiful themselves, and absolutely attuned to beauty; a hand that could unerringly give life and substance to all the visions, however sublime, that arose in the painter's brain. All the joyousness of *Juventus Mundi* is his, purged from its earthliness and steeped in heavenly light and purity. Fortunately for us, in spite of his astounding capacities for work and the infinite variety of his style, his short life was not distracted by the multitude of interests that occupied many of his contemporaries. He was heart and soul a painter, and with all his transcendent genius and his immense fame, industrious and modest, ready to learn as well from the elegant grace of Perugino, the religious spirit of Fra Bartolommeo, or the strength of Michael Angelo, as from his serious study of the Antique. As the Renaissance gave to each great master his special gift, to Lionardo its wonder, to Michael Angelo its strength and sadness, to Titian its glory, so Raphael was dowered with its beauty, the beauty that appeals to the spirit and the intellect as well as to the senses. Nothing seems to have been a difficulty to him. He mastered all the technicalities of his art with almost intuitive ease. Whatever his subject, Pagan or Christian, portrait or ideal, he threw himself into it with the same sweet seriousness, painting with equal facility in vigorous rapid fresco or in delicate miniature. His kindly winning manners won him the love no less than the praise of his contemporaries, and enabled him to work in perfect

Raphael, 1483-1520

harmony with the host of lesser artists and craftsmen—apprentices to painting, engravers, decorators, carvers, workers in mosaic—who helped to carry out his great designs. All Italy was overwhelmed with grief when, on Good Friday 1520, after but a few days' illness, this busy brilliant life was prematurely ended.

Correggio, c. 1494-1534

The work of Correggio is illumined by the same youthful radiance, but with a lighter, more pagan cast. In his pictures, if there is nothing to sadden there is little to elevate. They are like sweet witching songs that are meant to ravish the hearer rather than to teach or impress him. They have a peculiar glowing loveliness, the loveliness of fair young faces, of fresh vivid colour, of all-irradiating light. They sparkle with joyous animation. His angels are innocent and lovable rather than spiritual. And yet, though this young painter worked alone in the kingdom of his bright fancies, though he had no opportunity of learning from the masterpieces that his contemporaries were producing, though his spirit was so blithe and buoyant, yet he eclipsed all the other masters except Michael Angelo in daring dexterity of foreshortening, and had no less command than Lionardo da Vinci over the mysteries of chiaroscuro.

Michael Angelo, 1475-1564

How great is the contrast between these two happy spirits and the mighty overwrought soul of Michael Angelo, ever thwarted in his aspirations, and heart-broken for the fate of his city! Michael Angelo's great paintings in the Sistine Chapel were undertaken with reluctance. Painting, he said, was not his work; he was a sculptor, already overwhelmed with commissions he had undertaken and commenced. But

Julius II. was not a patron who would brook argument. And surely, as the master lay on his scaffolding locked into the quiet chapel, scarcely breaking off for food or sleep, he must have become altogether fascinated by the sublimity of those grand and awful visions which shaped themselves in visible form upon the great ceiling above him almost as fast as his mind conceived them. Whether or no he cared for the things that concern painters—the charm of warm colouring, the beauty of trees and flowers and landscapes, of gold and jewels, and delicate textures these were not the things he wished to render by his art. Nor could he catch the tone of other painters. Raphael might learn majesty from him, but if he must be a painter it must be in his own way, and that a sculptor's way. All his interest was focussed on the human form. By it alone —in youth, maturity, or age; living, rejoicing, sleeping, agonising, dying; in its terror or in its sweetness—his thoughts must find expression. The *Last Judgment* was painted when he was much older, very old and heart weary for such a vast work, and when his style, though not weakened, had become harder. The strained postures in which his absolute mastery of his art was displayed had become more frequent and more painful. 'The whole wall swarms with ascending and descending, poised and hovering shapes—men and women rising from the grave before the Judge, taking their station among the saved, or sinking with unutterable anguish to the place of doom—a multitude that no man can number, surging to and fro in dim tempestuous air. . . . Squadrons of angels bearing the emblems of Christ's passion whirl round Him like

grey thunder-clouds, and all the saints lean forward from their vantage ground to curse and threaten.' [1]

Michael Angelo outlived, as we have said, the golden days of Italian art, outlived the Renaissance. All the marks of decadence showed themselves among the followers of Raphael and Michael Angelo—affectation, straining after effect, feebleness hiding itself behind an exaggerated display of movement. Where, as in the case of Giulio Romano, there was really genius it burns with a lurid light. All the old high inspirations are trampled under foot, and art becomes pagan with the false paganism that is self-conscious, indecent, depraved—the false paganism that proved the ruin of the Italian Renaissance.

Giulio Romano, 1499-1546

The reader will have noticed that nearly all the masters mentioned hitherto have been Florentines. For three hundred years that one small city among the Tuscan hills had never ceased to give painter after painter to the world, 'star by star,' each with his 'gift of fires from God.' There had been scarcely a break in the glorious tradition, from Cimabue's triumph day to those disastrous times when, with the greatest and saddest of her sons, Italian art died away. We have only had time to glance at a few of the most prominent characteristics of its chief exponents; but if we were to examine Tuscan Art as a whole, we should find that, immense as its achievement is, there is yet one important feature of the Renaissance which it misses, and that is its voluptuousness. The sense of beauty so highly developed among the Florentines

[1] J. A. Symonds, *Italian Renaissance*, vol. iii. pp. 424, 425.

was intellectual rather than sensuous. They were, as Vasari says, a critical people, ready to stimulate their painters by finding faults. For a passionate abandonment to the more vehement emotions, and to the luxury of sumptuous living, we must turn to the beautiful corrupt city, which lay like a pearl in the embrace of the sea.

The Leadership in Art passes to Venice

Of all the cities which in the Middle Ages asserted the independence of civil industry and commercial prosperity as against armed oppression, Venice was the foremost. Having with infinite labour won a position among the shifting sands of the Adriatic, she stood there for centuries, proud, indomitable, the keeper of the gates of the East, receiving the first-fruits of all the merchandise of India, Persia, and Arabia. For long years the strong business instincts of her merchants kept her from becoming enervated by her contact with the East, or by the wealth that poured into her coffers. While other cities rose and fell—now republics, now under the heel of a despot—she stood unmoved through the centuries in the tranquil dignity of her ancient constitution, maintaining internal peace, and hurling back all the attacks made upon her by jealous rivals or greedy princes. Her public pageants were as gorgeous as unstinted wealth could make them. Life in Venice was easy and luxurious.

It is easy to trace the influences that gave the Venetians the peculiar sensitiveness to colour which is their contribution to the Renaissance. From the rich Oriental stuffs they constantly handled in their trade they could not but imbibe an appreciation of gorgeous colouring, just as from their contact with Oriental ways

they learned Oriental voluptuousness and vice. And then in Venice herself there was everything to educate a painter's eye, and to stimulate his imagination. Rising with her marble palaces from lagoons which at dawn and sunset burn with the glowing radiance of the heart of a ring-opal, now broken into a thousand tender tints of green and rose, now uniting into a broad sheet of burnished gold, she is like no other city in the world. And beside the flaming orange and purple of her sunset clouds colours other than the most intense pale ineffectually. It is no wonder that they compared her to Aphrodite rising from the morning sea, her fair flesh gleaming with the gold-pink lights of white alabaster. We have seen how her architects loved to raise fantastic palaces, richly carved and lightly poised on slender arches above her winding water-ways. Then there was the crowning wonder of her great cathedral of St. Mark, built of old by Eastern builders; a marvellous piece of perfect colouring; fairylike with its clustering pillars and snow-white domes hanging like foam-bells in the air, with its wonders of silver, and gold, of jasper and porphyry and serpentine; with its fantastic sculptures of alabaster and marble, and the rich glow of its mosaics. This was the city of the Bellini and Giorgione, of Titian and Tintoretto, and Veronese.

But the Golden Age of Venice was past before the days of her great painters. The discoveries of the adventurers had opened up new sources of wealth, more dazzling and unbounded than those over which Venice had command. Daring sailors had rounded the Cape of Good Hope, and found a new route for the treasures of the

East.[1] Not only in trade but in arms she was outwitted and beaten. The enemies she had despised joined forces against her in the League of Cambrai (1508). The plague came to add its desolating moral and physical ruin. Morally Venice became the most corrupt city of Italy, the gathering place for such choice spirits as Aretino and Giulio Romano. But, as in Rome and Spain, the time of her political and social decay was the time of her greatest artistic achievement. In the late luxurious art of the Renaissance she leads the way. Her painting, even at its highest, draws little inspiration from deep religious or philosophic thought. All is glowing, sensuous, emotional. It was well that Venetian art culminated late, so late that its masters could profit by all the efforts of the Florentines after technical skill, for the Venetians were not interested in intellectual problems, in the sciences of anatomy or perspective. They were able to imbibe all this half unconsciously from the work already accomplished. It was their task to reflect in their glowing canvases all the sumptuousness and magnificence of sixteenth century life, and its abandonment to the pleasures of the senses.

But Venice was not always irreligious. In the days of her true greatness she had been noted for the severe piety of her citizens. This is reflected in the work of some of her early painters, whose school culminates in Gian Bellini, a master who, with all his Venetian love of colour, was no less idealistic and spiritual than Fra Angelico or Perugino. It is in Giorgione, the pupil of Gian Bellini and probably

Gian Bellini, 1427-1516

Giorgione, 1478-1511

[1] Vasco de Gama rounded the Cape in 1497.

the master of Titian, that we first find the art that is entirely preoccupied with the things of sight and sense, the art which exists, not to instruct or elevate, but simply to make life richer and more beautiful. In the pictures of this young musician and painter, who died for love, are gathered up all the early Venetian sensuousness and sweetness; yet not untouched with a deep and tender pathos. Giorgione saw everything with the eye of a colourist, modelling his forms by light and shade rather than outline. His great service to modern domestic art lies in his invention of *genre* painting, that is, of detachable pictures painted in oils representing scenes of actual life, chosen not for any deep significance, but simply for their picturesque idyllic charm.

Tintoretto, 1518-1594

Of the three great painters of Venice, Tintoretto is the one that most often leaves this world of comfortable and gorgeous things, and soars to spiritual heights. He is not religious, but he has an extraordinary imaginative power and energy, which whirl him to those heights. The Italians call him the thunderbolt of painting, so much life and force does he breathe into all he touches. He has the strength and daring of Michael Angelo, by whose work (especially the recumbent figures of the Sacristy of *S. Lorenzo*) he was much influenced, but he is more startling and unconventional. His contemporaries were shocked by his entire disregard of tradition in his scenes from Bible history. His choice of such scenes was determined by their dramatic and tragic possibilities; his intense and terrible imagination found full scope in such subjects as *The Last Judgment*, *The Massacre of the Innocents*, or *The Plague of Serpents*, where

he has raised the horror of the scene to the highest pitch of desperate wildness, as well as in the savage stormy landscapes in which his mood sometimes found expression. He loved to work on a grand scale, as in the 'vast sketches' (as Mr. Ruskin calls them) in the Scuola of San Rocco, or in the immense *Paradise* in the council chamber of the Doge's Palace, which is his masterpiece. In this picture, where seas of saints and angels appear surging in circle after circle of mystic light which radiates from the sacred central figures, Tintoretto's wonderful colouring is shown to great advantage—the deep transparent shadows, the concentrated light, and the peculiar pervading tone of deep rich crimson. A true Venetian, he knew how to produce the luminous golden tints which he admired in Titian, but he often preferred to keep the tone of his own paintings quiet to sombreness, making his points of bright light and vivid colour the more telling by his economy of them. He was deeply interested in chiaroscuro, fascinated by the play of cross lights and peculiar effects of atmosphere.

In Paolo Veronese is typified and consummated the purely mundane magnificence of Venice, all its love of pomp and pageantry. His *Marriage in Cana* is one of his finest paintings, and is a type of all his work. In this picture he transports the simple homely folk of the Bible story to a gorgeous Venetian palace; clothes them in splendour of silken brocades and jewelled ornaments; loads the tables with gold and silver plate, and heaped up fruit; crowds the scene with guests and servants, and musicians, and on-lookers; until the Divine figure, which should be the focus of all, is almost lost to sight amid the gay profusion. Veronese is not

Veronese, c. 1530-1588

gross like the Germans, but he is never spiritual or poetical. He is always grand, majestic, pompous, alike in his types of human beings and in the scenes in which he sets them.

The same splendour appears in Titian, but sublimed by greater beauty, and softened by a more voluptuous spirit. Titian strikes the happy medium between the tempestuous vehemence of Tintoretto, and the somewhat vulgar Philistinism of Veronese. He is less absorbed in purely material magnificence than the latter. He has the tranquillity that belongs to the highest genius, to perfect mastery of his art, and absolute power to carry out all that is in his mind. He is a man of the late Renaissance; worldly, but with a cultured aristocratic worldliness. He has no religious impulses. If he loves to paint Madonna in a sea of golden glory, it is simply for the beauty and grandeur of the subject. In him the Venetian spirit finds full expression. As no other city was so steeped in intense appreciation of beauty, and in undisguised licentiousness, so in no other painter is there such a complete union of ravishing loveliness and frankest sensuousness as in Titian, who painted his mistresses for Madonnas. It is, of course, in colouring that he is pre-eminent. His forms are perfect, but he is not interested in them. Colour fascinates him. We shall have to speak of the brilliance of early Flemish colouring, but the colouring of Titian, and in a less degree of the whole Venetian school, surpasses that of all others, no matter how bright and vivid and rich it may be. The difference is more easily seen than defined; but it lies principally in the luminous quality of Venetian work, appearing alike in the most delicate pearly tints, and in those that are deepest and richest. 'The Venetian

Titian, 1477-1576

painters,' says Mr. Pater,[1] 'seem to work with gold dust or gold thread, spinning its fine filaments through the solemn human flesh away into the white plastered walls of the thatched huts.'

Section II.—In Spain

Influenced by Titian

It was the grand manner of Titian, so stately and yet so warm, which most strongly influenced the development of painting in Spain. We can well understand that the glow and passion of Venice were more in harmony with the temper of the Spaniards than was the colder, more practical intelligence of Florence. Painting in Spain was not fully developed until the Renaissance was at its full height. For a short time it flourished with a luxuriant brilliant growth, while the nation that produced it was already falling into decay. There is very little Spanish painting that is earlier than the close of the fifteenth century. In the distracted times that preceded the conquest of Granada in 1492 there was not the leisure nor the refined atmosphere necessary for the development of fine art. True, early in the fifteenth century, Starnino and Dello had come from Florence and had painted for the King; the great Jan van Eyck had travelled in Portugal, leaving pupils there to spread the new method through the Peninsula; while our old friend the Marquis of Santillana had caused portraits of himself and his wife to be painted by some wandering English artist. But it was not until the time of Ferdinand and Isabella, and the establishment of a central court, that a really national school began to be

[1] *History of the Renaissance*, p. 159.

formed. From the time of Rincon, court painter to this King and Queen, art advanced with rapid strides, much influenced by new ideas and methods brought from the studios of the Italian masters by travelling students, until it culminated, in the seventeenth century, in Velasquez and Murillo.

Rincon, c. 1446-1500

Art in Spain, like literature, had to reckon with the Catholic reaction. Never in the time of its greatest splendour and vigour was it able to free itself from the service of the Church, never able, like art in other lands, to wander at will over the broad fields of classic story and every-day life. The office of Inspector of Sacred Pictures for the Inquisition was no sinecure. Its rules were strict and minute; the painter who transgressed them, putting four nails where there should have been three, or exhibiting more of the nude figure than was absolutely necessary, might look for the painting out of the offending portion as his smallest punishment. Gloomy, Spanish art could not fail to be under such circumstances: but the repression gives it a depth and intensity, a restrained glow, which now and then breaks out into almost lurid splendour. We must remember, in estimating the benumbing influence of the Inquisition, that while it created an atmosphere in which Michael Angelo could not have breathed, it was not foreign to the intensely religious spirit of the Spaniards themselves; that they admired and supported it while they shuddered at it, and that they were able to advance as far as they pleased, within the limitations they had voluntarily imposed upon themselves.

Religious character of Spanish Art

The painting produced under these conditions is marked, then, first by a passion of religious fervour, best

illustrated perhaps in the pictures of Morales, called *El Divino* by his countrymen. This painter, like Fra Angelico, remained untouched by all the worldliness of the Renaissance, and, maintaining the mediæval consciousness of the unseen and its mystic piety, painted reverently, often on his knees, and after devout reception of the Blessed Sacrament, pictures which have a gleam of the Divine essence, which his more brilliant brothers missed. But while the monk of Fiesole loved to paint joyous angels radiant in the light of God's presence, it was divine sorrow that appealed to Morales, the haunting silent agony of the bereaved Mother, the noble pathos of the Son of Man, done to death, but still God.

Morales, 1509-1600

Meanwhile that susceptibility to the beauty of the external world, which the Spaniards fully shared with the other nations at this time, was driven to find its expression in colour. Zurbaran, who would, one thinks, have been at home depicting the gleaming limbs and flying draperies of the goddesses of Hellas, contents himself with the white robes of Carthusian monks; but in his masterpiece, the *Triumph of St. Thomas Aquinas*, is fully shown his love of more rich and sumptuous colouring. Zurbaran delighted in those sharp contrasts of light and shade which the Spaniards had learned from Caravaggio. This was a Neapolitan painter who, in the decadence of Italian art, startled the world by a new style—a style marked by bold powerful modelling, by strong lights and heavy shadows, and by an imitation of nature that is brutal in its realism. With all its faults, his style became immensely popular, and exercised no good influence upon Spanish and French painting,

Zurbaran, 1598-1662

The Naturalistic School

producing everywhere schools of *Naturalisti.* A man of much the same type as Caravaggio was Ribera, called *Lo Spagnoletto,* one of those restless, lawless spirits, in whom, as in Cellini, the very spirit of revolt seems incarnate. The fatal narrowness of Spanish painting is shown in the work of this artist, who could find no better scope for his great knowledge of anatomy and his keen observation than in depicting the agonies of martyrs in the most repulsive form. At the same time his *Deposition from the Cross* shows of what sublimity he was capable had his choice of subject been freer.

Ribera, 1588-1656

Another characteristic of the Spanish School is its predilection for portrait painting—perhaps because it was the only form of secular painting that was safe from ecclesiastical censure. It was in this direction that Velasquez became pre-eminent, for even he, the first artist of Spain who had the courage to break away from ecclesiastical tradition, and to paint boldly whatsoever he would, was not drawn into the seductive paths of Paganism, but contented himself with portraiture. This no doubt was partly due to the fact that studying from the nude was unheard of in Spain, a fact which also accounts for the absence of delicacy and tenderness in the work of Velasquez. He was a painter of men rather than women. On his canvases, sombre and yet rich, like all that is truly Spanish, they live and breathe in the vigour of their glowing Southern beauty, or, if nature has been less kind than fortune, in the splendour of magnificent robes, of gold and jewels. All his subjects, from the king to the water-carrier in the street, are treated in the same easy, spirited, unconventional manner. He

Portrait Painting

Velasquez, 1599-1660

felt, too, and was almost the first Spanish painter to depict, the charm of the sunset sky and of bosky foliage. But in the main it was humanity that attracted him; humanity as it is, unidealised, but seen in a kindly tolerant spirit.

This was the golden age of Spanish culture. While his kingdom was fast crumbling to pieces for want of a strong controlling hand, the young King Philip IV. devoted all the energy he possessed to the encouragement of art and literature. He loved magnificence and pageantry, and Lope de Vega found in him an ever-appreciative patron. Poets and other literary men were ever welcome at his court. Not only had he a real appreciation of excellence in art but he dabbled in painting himself. He heaped honours upon Velasquez, who did much to foster painting among his countrymen, stretching out a helping hand to brother artists less fortunate than himself, and assisting his royal master in the collection of treasures of art from Italy to serve as models and incentives to native painting. When he travelled to Rome on this mission he was received everywhere with the honour due to a great master. In Italy he studied the works of Raphael and Michael Angelo, and would spend hours before the great Venetian masters: yet he never relinquished his own strong Spanish individuality.

The Escurial, the triumph of Renaissance architecture in Spain, was becoming, under the fostering care of art-loving monarchs, an unrivalled school for the artist. It contained—besides many pictures by the early Spanish masters of the pietistic type which was preferred by the monkish King Philip II.—the splendid series of paintings sent by Titian at the invitation of Charles V., which

formed the style of generations of Spanish artists; a few works of Rubens, and much of the best work of Velasquez, besides the Italian pictures and statues which he had helped to choose. Thus, when in 1642 the young student Murillo, too poor to go to Italy, came to Madrid to ask advice from the kindly court-painter, he found that there was no need to travel further than the Escurial in search of great examples. Murillo became one of the most popular of religious painters, a position for which he had every qualification. Far less unconventional than Velasquez, he does not by any originality of motive or treatment in his pictures soar above the comprehension of the average observer. At the same time they are inspired by genuine religious sentiment, are true to nature, rich in colouring, which grew mellower and softer as the painter advanced in years, and faultless in execution. He became known as the 'painter of the Conception,' so often did he represent the Virgin 'in glory,' feeling, like his great example Titian, the peculiar capability of the subject for dramatic and majestic representation. In his secular pictures, principally studies of beggars and children, he is attracted by the shady side of life, and does not shrink from being unnecessarily repulsive. He was an enthusiast for his art, and to encourage it he established a public academy. But after his death, in 1682, Spanish painting shared in the general decay into which the whole nation was sinking.

Murillo, 1618-1682

In Portugal, during its brief period of glory before it fell into the grasp of Spain, there had been a short but very brilliant era of painting. Lisbon, like Antwerp and like Venice, was a rich prosperous port, full of wealthy

citizens and visitors from all parts of the world. As the leader in the van of discovery, Portugal reaped the benefit of all that medley of strange new ideas which poured in from the New World to stir and inflame men's imaginations. And during the first years of the fifteenth century, all this rich confusion was reflected in a vigorous and fervent outburst of painting, followed, alas! by centuries of decline.

Painting in Portugal

Section III.—In France

The difference in the style of architecture north of the Alps was naturally accompanied by a difference in the style of its handmaid Painting. In sunny Italy window-openings are small, and there are large intervening wall-spaces to be decorated with fresco paintings; in the darker north larger windows are necessary, and the wall-spaces become comparatively insignificant. And so it was in glass painting that the art of mediæval France found its highest development. In the rich windows of Chartres or La Sainte Chapelle we may see how well these old painters understood colour, both how to obtain the deepest, purest tints, and how to combine them in a scheme of jewelled brilliance; we may see, too, how they were feeling their way to a freer and bolder style of drawing. But in the fifteenth century glass painting had begun to decline, and for the first signs of modern art we must turn from it to the art of illumination. The illuminators of Paris were famous in Dante's time, and they were closely rivalled by those of Touraine. While Paris art owed much to Flemish influence,

The Illuminators

adopting the brilliant colouring of the Flemish illuminators without their hardness, the artists of Tours were brought into contact with the Italians, from whom they learnt a scientific and refined style while retaining their own lightness of touch and their realistic treatment.

Fouquet, 1415-1485

In the illuminations of Jean Fouquet, painter to the king when the court was yet at Tours, we find all the characteristics of an adult style: a knowledge of perspective, of the laws of composition, skilful delineation of the human form, and an original and beautiful scheme of colouring, remarkable for its soft and silvery yet vivid radiance. Among the works ascribed to Fouquet are the miniatures illustrating two translations of *Livy*, one of *Josephus*, an original *Livy*, a *Virgil*, and a *Boccaccio*, in all of which the painter, who had travelled in Italy, shows a true appreciation of the classic spirit, if his knowledge of antique Roman detail was but slight. It may have been from Flemish painters that he learnt his skill in the rendering of textures. It was of course from them that he learnt the new art of painting in oils, if, indeed, he was the author of the oil paintings that are attributed to him: the *Virgin and Child*, and a portrait of *Etienne Chevalier*. But, whatever he knew of Flemish or Italian art, Fouquet remains as truly French in spirit as are the landscapes that form his backgrounds, and it was a truly national tradition that he handed on to his successors. The development of the miniature from a mere decoration into a realistic representation of life was carried on by

Perréal

Jean Perréal, 'painter and varlet' to Charles VIII. and Louis XII. Perréal well illustrates the ambiguous position still held by a painter at this

period, for it was the business of the artist, whose only extant oil painting represents the espousals of Charles and his bride Anne of Brittany, to superintend the trousseau of the king's second wife Mary Tudor, and a few months later the funeral of Charles, as well as all the more imposing court functions and pageants. Perréal felt the influence of the impulse to art which was the result of Charles VIII.'s Italian expedition, when the French soldiers came back 'with the wonders of the South on their lips and her treasures in their hands. They brought with them books and paintings, they brought with them armour inlaid with gold and silver, tapestries enriched with precious metals, embroidered clothing and even household furniture. Distributed by many hands in many different places each precious thing became a separate centre of initiative power.' [1]

Influence of Italy

From this time French art fell more and more under Italian influence. Francis, who in his enthusiasm would have liked to make his country more Italian than Italy herself, delighted to welcome the great masters of the South to his Court. Among those so honoured were Lionardo da Vinci, Andrea del Sarto, and Cellini, with the architects Rosso and Primaticcio. Under their influence Fontainebleau, where they painted and collected pictures, became a centre whence the seductive power of the Italian naturalistic school exercised a powerful sway over French students. The French painting of the Renaissance has the same 'preciousness,' the same fine foreign flavour that we have noticed in the sculpture and

[1] Mrs. Mark Pattison, *Renaissance of Art in France*, vol. i. p. 3.

in the poetry of the time. It is not meant to appeal to the people, but to be the treasure of the refined and cultured; of those who can feel the charm of style, and are flattered by a classical allusion. It is difficult to estimate the extent to which the young French art retained its individuality, owing to the fact that the ravages of time and the more cruel storms of revolution have spared to us very little French painting of the sixteenth century. Changes of taste and fashion, too, in a land where those arbitrary powers rule supreme, have sent many a canvas to rot in a damp cellar, and caused many a fading fresco to be painted out. Of the pictures that remain the great majority are portraits. This is perhaps partly due to family pride and a reverence for ancestral dignity; but it is also due to the fact that, in the French as in the Spanish Renaissance, the collection of portraits became an absorbing fashion. It was in these portraits that the traditions of French art were kept safe amid the rush of Italian influence. They are scattered among the palaces of France, Chenonceau and Azay le Rideau possessing many specimens. Most of them are attributed to the Clouet school. There were three painters of the Clouet family: Jean, who was in the service of the Duke of Burgundy, his son, sometimes called *Jean Clouet II.*, and his grandson François, who was often called by the familiar name of *Janet*. There are no extant paintings which can with certainty be attributed to the first Jean, while those of the second are hardly to be distinguished from many others of the *École des Clouets*. But the pictures of François rank in the first order of portraiture. The chief characteristics

The Clouets

Jean Clouet II., 1485-1545

of the *École des Clouets* are *naïveté*, the precision with which detail is rendered, and the French purity and delicacy of the colouring, the heads standing out against a clear blue-green background. The way in which the flesh tints are modelled shows that these painters had but an imperfect mastery of the new medium. The colour has been first laid on in one flat hard sheet, and on this, when it was quite dry, the lights and shadows were hatched with a full brush of diluted colour—a system which has proved disastrous in its results, as the process of restoration has in many cases entirely removed the upper film, leaving only the cold hard under-tint.

François Clouet, 1510-1572

François lived in the full light of the French Renaissance. He was the friend of Ronsard, who addressed more than one poem to him as *Janet*. He loved to paint the sumptuous dress of the day, the shimmering silks, the puffed and slashed sleeves, the gold embroideries and jewels; but his portraits have a higher charm than mere magnificence. The angularity of his predecessors has disappeared, and we find the skill of a master who knows as well how to interpret the fearless spirit of childhood as the weariness of a monarch for whom sovereignty has no longer any illusions. The steady advance made by the successive generations of the Clouets is well illustrated by the fact that more pictures than one which certainly belong to the school of Jean Clouet II., if they are not from his own hand, have been attributed to Holbein, while an undoubted painting of François was long credited with being the work of Lionardo da Vinci. François was, however, no slavish imitator of Italian art. He only yielded to its seductions long

enough to gain greater refinement, strength, and insight, before he developed his own genuinely national and individual manner.

Another painter who upheld the traditions of the art of his own country was Jean Cousin, a versatile genius who, besides being the last of the great generation of glass painters, practised oil painting and sculpture. In all his work is shown the excellent taste which distinguishes the best French school. He was able to share in the bright fanciful grace of the French Renaissance, without being led into any of its extravagances.

Cousin, 1501-1589

The sixteenth century closed for France amid scenes of civil war and religious strife. The atmosphere was no longer favourable to art. The students went away to Italy, and the young native school, which, under the painters we have mentioned, aided by the sculptors Columbe and Goujon, had made a fair beginning, languished and almost disappeared. When French painting revived again with Vouet and Valentin, it had become thoroughly Italianate and 'naturalistic;' and Italian it remained until, in the reign of Louis XIV., it culminated in the grand classic style of France's greatest painter, Poussin.

Section IV.—In Flanders

It would have been well for French painting if, instead of yielding so easily to the seductions of Italy, it had admitted more freely the sturdy Flemish independence which showed itself in the Clouets. Painting in Flanders was of ancient fame, and doubtless owed something to the long political connection between that country and Byzantium, the cradle of mediæval art. The early

Flemish illuminators were widely known for their skill and the brilliance of their colouring; they, like the French, were feeling their way to a more lifelike representation of nature. The Renaissance in the fifteenth century was a purely spontaneous movement, due to national vigour unaided by Italian influence. In the days of the Hanseatic League, the Flemish towns of Ghent and Bruges were second to none in Europe. It was at Bruges that the powerful Dukes of Burgundy held their court; and the rich Flemish merchants were not behind the Florentine citizens in their willingness to pour out their wealth in civic shows and pageants, and all the pomp of mediæval life, as well as in the encouragement of every art. They were a refined and cultured people in their way; their government was stable and enlightened; their artizans were an intellectual, well-trained class of men; their immense commercial activity kept them in touch with all the centres of culture in Italy, France, and Spain, as well as with the imagination-kindling riches of Asia and Africa. In fact all the conditions necessary to art were to be found here, no less than at Venice, and it was from these prosperous citizens, by no aid from prince or church, that the young, strong art sprang into existence.

National character of Flemish painting

As we advance northward from Italy we find, with less ideal beauty, a greater practical command of the materials and methods of painting. The painter whose lot is cast in a cold foggy climate cannot dash out his conceptions upon the wet fresco, which more than any other material encourages breadth and freedom of touch and freshness of inspiration. He knows that in a few years such pictures would be mildewed and blistered, and he is obliged to

seek for media that will enable his work to stand the test of time and damp, even though he has to sacrifice much of the spontaneity of fresco. The difficulty he meets with rouses all his energies, and he becomes a chemist, thoroughly acquainted with the properties of oils and the composition of pigments; he spends hours among his crucibles, boiling, grinding, preparing, before he begins to paint. It was to this practical knowledge, and to the extreme carefulness of their work, that the painters of Flanders owed their mastery over colour. But they learnt more than that. They learnt the secret of the process which revolutionised art, and made it possible for the people to have pictures in their homes as well as on the walls of their churches.

Discovery of an oil medium

Painting in oils was not unknown before the days of the Van Eycks. From the earliest times siccative (or drying) oils had been used as varnish to preserve paintings, and in the fourteenth century, if not before, pigments had been mixed with the oil. But in order to ensure its drying, the oil had been reduced to such a consistency that it could only be laid on with a knife or some such tool, in flat tints, and was quite useless for shading. We therefore not infrequently find in Italy cases where the draperies and background are painted in oil, while the faces and hands, and other more delicate details, are in tempera. The discovery of the Van Eycks was that of an oil medium which would dry, and yet was plastic enough to be freely handled with the brush. The artistic world was at once attracted by the convenience of the new method, and by the brilliant effects which it produced, and painters from Italy hastened to learn the secret of

the Flemish masters. Hubert, the elder brother, who was probably the inventor of the method, died young, leaving his brother Jan to inherit double glory. The masterpiece of the two brothers is the famous triptych, the *Adoration of the Lamb*, a great and ambitious work, which well displays the wonderful precocity of the new-born art. For the genius of Jan Van Eyck overleapt at once all the difficulties that were to puzzle his successors. Not only are his colours so deep and glowing that the 'purple of Van Eyck' has passed into a proverb, but he had perfect mastery of perspective and composition, arranging the most difficult groups with consummate ease and simplicity, and rendering shades of expression with the skill of a born portrait painter.

Hubert Van Eyck, c. 1366-1426
Jan Van Eyck, c. 1390-1440

Sudden as was the growth of Flemish painting, its early excellence was sustained by several masters of great power. No one did more to spread the new method, both in his own country and in Germany, than Rogier Van der Weyden, the contemporary of Jan Van Eyck. This artist was born at Tournai, and was one of the first of Flemish painters to travel southwards and to study Italian art. Rogier was a man of great activity and enthusiasm, training innumerable pupils and practising every form of art. If he had not Van Eyck's intuitive command of technique, he was inspired by a more intense religious conviction, which appears in the gravity and earnestness of his work. The pathetic *Entombment of Christ*, in the National Gallery, with its delicate landscape, is painted on linen in tempera —a favourite method with the northern masters before

Rogier Van der Weyden, c. 1399-1464

movable canvases came into vogue. His most eminent pupil was Memling, whose many well-preserved pictures show—especially in his types of feminine beauty —an ideality and tenderness rare in Flemish painting. His work appears at its best in the great altar-piece at Bruges, representing the *Marriage of St. Catharine;* while in his exquisite *Reliquary of St. Ursula* he found scope, at the same time, for his Flemish love of delicate minute work, and his southern love of fair faces.

Hans Memling, c. 1439-1495

The centre of Art in the Netherlands now passes to Antwerp, where Quentin Matsys, the blacksmith, carried on the vigorous masculine tradition of the Van Eycks. His masterpiece, an *Entombment* painted for Antwerp Cathedral, contains certain heads, of which Sir Joshua Reynolds said that they are not exceeded by Raphael. Though he painted religious subjects with much delicacy and feeling, he did not care to confine himself to them. He was intensely interested in the busy prosperous life of the great commercial city in which he lived, and he loves to take us into the counting-houses and show us the merchant, with his rugged face and his rich sober garb, counting his gains, while his homely wife looks on, more interested in the glitter of the gold than in the leaves of the missal in her hands. Matsys, though he painted on a larger and broader scale than most of the early Flemish masters, still staunchly upheld the traditions of their school. He has its richness of colouring, its sturdy realism bordering on the grotesque, and, to a certain extent, its minute patient care in drawing backgrounds, whether of landscape in

Quentin Matsys, 1466-1531

which every flower and every tuft of grass seems to have its own individuality, or of Gothic architecture mazy with fantastic pinnacles and steep roofs. This minuteness, which appears also in the French and Dutch schools, shows, of course, that the art of these countries originated in missal-painting, and contrasts with the breadth and simplicity which the constant habit of painting on walls gave to the early Italian masters.

Italian Influence

After the time of Matsys Flemish art declined, yielding, as in France, to the seductive fascinations of Italy, an influence by which it was all the more warped and stultified in proportion as its rugged realism was antipathetic to the soft ideality of the South. Jan, the son of Quentin Matsys, was one of the first of the young painters who came home from Italy with the idea that they were destined to infuse a new grace and sweetness into Flemish art, not perceiving that its homely simplicity only became absurd and affected when it aped the graces of a sunnier clime, and that a Flemish woman, fat and flabby or thin and meagre, came none the nearer to resembling a Greek goddess by being stripped of her clothing.

Rubens, 1577-1640

For nearly a century this false and hybrid style prevailed, until Rubens appeared, with his exuberant energy, his inexhaustible invention and his strong originality, and called Flemish art back to its true vocation. Rubens is a typical gentleman of the Renaissance, a scholar, a courtier, and a diplomatist; a man who united to his winning graceful manner, his handsome presence, and his unfailing tact, a warm-hearted, impulsive disposition and unfailing good spirits. He was equally

popular in his own country, which he enriched with innumerable paintings; in Spain, where he and Velasquez, with whom he had so much in common, became fast friends; in Italy, where he copied many paintings of the great masters, not hesitating to add in his copies a touch of his own more vehement style; in Paris, where Marie de Medici would have him decorate two galleries with scenes from the lives of herself and Henry IV.; and in England, where Charles I. showed him every mark of personal friendship. As a master of technique Rubens is unsurpassed. He preferred to paint religious pictures, loving the majestic and the grand better than simple every-day subjects; but there is nothing of the divine or the spiritual in his splendid healthy men and women. He painted a few mythological subjects, but his style is coarse and heavy for the delicate myths of Greece. Whatever his faults, his splendid vigour outweighs them all. Among his friends and pupils he counted Snyders, Van Dyck, Jordaens, and many other famous painters, and under his influence Flemish art was newly born.

Section V.—In Holland

Art in Holland seemed at first as though it would be developed on much the same lines as in Flanders, except that here the realistic approaches even nearer to the grotesque, the early painters delighting in a whimsical quaintness of treatment which accords strangely with the religious character of the subjects. But the cruel Spanish wars crushed out all artistic activity for many long years, and when, in the seventeenth century, Dutch painting at last emerged again, its spirit was rather that of the Prot-

estant Reformation than of the Renaissance. The Dutch masters still paint sacred pictures, but they have discarded, not only all the ecclesiastical traditions, but all the idealism, the beauty, and the mystic glow, which might remind them of their hated Spanish oppressors. 'The Italians,' it has been well said,[1] 'take us into the seventh heaven, and show us lovely visions of saints and angels flooded with a golden radiance from on high; the Dutchmen teach us to find an idyll in a broomstick or a Paradise in a tavern parlour. To their eyes a girl peeling potatoes is a worthier subject than a glorified Madonna; and if they paint sacred pictures, the Dutch Burgomaster and the homely Vrouw peep out from the thin disguise of the Holy Family.'

Rembrandt, the great Dutch master of the seventeenth century, belonged, like Velasquez and Rubens, to the time when painting had already reached its zenith in the land of its birth, and was fast declining. The Italian Renaissance was over. The great painters of this later age were like the younger sons in the fairy tales—on the elder brothers had been lavished the choicest gifts of Fate, the fairy godmother. The Florentines, the first-born, she had dowered with the sense of perfect beauty of form; the second, the Venetians, with the sense of splendour and harmony of colour; what was left, then, for the painters of Spain and the Netherlands—countries too prudish or too cold for the nude—but to repeat on their canvases the meagre ignoble forms of Hapsburg Kings and their dwarf jesters, or the lumpish Dutch merchants and their short fat wives? But the fairy godmother never neglects the youngest born. If

Rembrandt, 1607-1669

[1] H. J. Wilmot Buxton, *Dutch Art*, p. 148.

she knows his discipline must be harder, she has always some last unlooked for talisman that will bring the highest out of what seemed the most unpromising. And to these painters she gave the sense of light and air, so that realistic portraits of subjects repulsive in themselves become, when set by them in a halo of luminous atmosphere, the most beautiful objects of art. The artistic value of the subject matters little to them. Light and shadow are always at their command. Velasquez, with a few pale tints or a simple chord of subdued rich colours, is able to make his whole canvas gleam like a jewel in a darkened place. Rembrandt, living under skies where pure light is a rare and precious thing, makes us feel the full value of it, concentrating it where it will be most appreciated, and leaving the rest of the picture in luminous transparent shadow. Thus, in spite of his deliberate choice of common types set in every-day surroundings, he is able to infuse into all his work an unsurpassed majesty and dramatic intensity.

It is this charm of atmosphere, combined with close observation, that gives pre-eminence to Dutch landscape painting, as exemplified by Paul Potter, by Ruisdael, or by Van de Velde, and which throws an air of romance over the quiet homeliness of Peter de Hooch and Van de Heyde.

Section VI.—In Germany

By the time that art in Italy was awaking to a new life, the splendour of Germany's Golden Age was fading away, and the traditions of the miniature and wall painting, which had once flourished so brightly, were all but lost.

The country was divided among petty princes; its vague allegiance to a shadowy emperor gave it neither stability nor coherence. It was only here and there, in a city which, like Cologne, possessed in its great Cathedral a cradle and school of art, or which had, like Nuremberg, ancient charters and a peaceful independent government, that the delicate flower of painting could bloom freely. Even so, there are but two painters, Dürer and Holbein, whose genius was sufficiently vigorous and irrepressible to win for itself a way amid all the strife and turmoil of the German Renaissance. In the fourteenth century Cologne led the way with her painters—Meister Wilhelm (fl. 1358) 'who painted every man of whatever form as though he lived'; Meister Stephan, who painted the famous *Dombild;* and others, some of whom, like the 'Master of the *Death of the Virgin,*' are only known by their pictures. The brilliant innovations of the Van Eycks were brought to Germany early in the fifteenth century by Rogier Van der Weyden; and in the work of Martin Schongauer of Colmar, best known by his engravings, there already appear signs of originality and a spirit of revolt against tradition. The early German paintings are characterised by a hardness and realism which readily degenerate into grotesque; a peculiar crumpled arrangement of drapery; and a minuteness of detail which recalls the missal-derived painting of the Netherlands. Instead, however, of the elaborate backgrounds of missal-painting, they have the flat gold grounds of Italy.

The Masters of Cologne

Schongauer, 1450-1488

Meanwhile, in Nuremberg, a city of skilful craftsmen famous of old for their statuary and their work in gold,

lived the old painter Wolgemut, the founder of the Nuremberg school of wood-cutting, a craftsman of the first order, though his idea of beauty may differ from ours. To him, in 1486, was apprenticed the boy Albrecht Dürer, who was the son of a goldsmith of the town, and had, like so many of his Italian rivals, learnt delicacy of handling and skill in fine work from an early training in that craft. In 1490 the young painter set out on that *wanderschaft* which was part of the training of the young German artist. In his wanderings at this time he probably had his first glimpse of Venice, the city which loved him in later years and would fain have kept him as an honoured guest. In the warmth and sunshine and colour of the city of pearl and gold his whole being expanded—'How I shall freeze after this sunshine!' he says, in a letter home; but it was in vain that the Bellini held out the right hand of fellowship to him, in vain that he was offered wealth and a position among the painter princes of the South; a strange faithful yearning for the North led him always back to Nuremberg. Here, while Raphael was

Wolgemut, 1434-1519

Albrecht Dürer, 1471-1528

> *. . . flaming out his thoughts*
> *Upon a palace wall for Rome to see,*

he worked on in loneliness and domestic discomfort, regarded by most of the rich, sleek merchants of the city as a clever workman, nothing more. Never was the proverb about the prophet better exemplified; for Dürer stood high in the favour of the Emperor, he was honoured in the great art cities of Bruges and Ghent, a favourite at the Court of Brussels, courteously entreated by the King

of Denmark, and acknowledged as an equal by Raphael, who sent sketches to his far-off brother 'to show him his hand'; and yet, in 1524, after years of loyal service, he has to reproach his city with its niggardly refusal to help him to a decent competence. But, after all, it is not likely that he could have found life altogether congenial amid the brilliant corrupt society of Italy. He belonged to the northern Humanists, the men who both in art and in literature applied their new powers rather to the mending of existing evils than to the attempt to restore a bygone Golden Age. Pirkheimer, the famous scholar and reformer, and a wealthy burgher of Nuremberg, was his greatest friend. He knew and painted Erasmus and Melanchthon, and he worked with Conrad Celtes. Though, like Pirkheimer, he never broke from the Roman Communion, he had the greatest admiration for Luther, whom he called 'the spirit-enlightened one.' With his master Wolgemut he had a hand in the production of those daring woodcuts ridiculing the abuses of the Church of Rome, which would never have ventured into the light in a land where the Inquisition held sway. In his numerous sacred woodcuts and engravings—the series for the *Apocalypse*, the *Life of the Virgin* and the *History of Christ's Passion*—the same Protestant spirit is shown by the entire disregard for traditional treatment, the determined realism, and the 'humanising' of the Holy Persons represented, by placing them amid every-day surroundings. At the same time he loves allegory, and is deeply imbued with the sense of the supernatural and mysterious which belongs to the Teutonic spirit. This appears at its best in the weird fantastic character of his famous engraving on copper, *The Knight,*

Death, and the Devil. Line drawing and engraving seem to have been most congenial to him; but that he had command of a dignified broad style in painting is well shown in his large picture of the *Adoration of the Trinity,* as well as in his masterpiece representing the four Apostles, one of the finest pictures of even that century. He tells us himself, in a letter written from Venice, the home of colour, that 'he has silenced all the painters who said he was good at engravings but could not manage colour.' Of his many excellent portraits there is none more beautiful than the well-known one of himself which bears the date 1500. In its grand serious dignity it might be the picture of a young king—the consciousness of a high mission in his steadfast eyes (it was, he said, his mission to depict the sufferings of Christ); strength, purity, and sweetness in the resolute brow, the straight nose, and the finely curved lips. Albrecht Dürer—in his unconventionality, in his almost grotesque way of expressing the new ideas of which the air was full, in his simple homely devotion, his uncompromising truth to nature, his stern grappling with the brutish element in human life—sums up the tendencies of the German school of painting, as it would have been, had the circumstances of the time permitted it to develop. Dürer was a scholar, a writer, a sculptor, and an engineer, as well as a painter. He founded no regular school, but among those who carried on his methods were Hans Burckmair, who drew many of the fine vigorous woodcuts for the *Triumph of Maximilian;* Aldegraver, a skilful engraver of portraits; and the seven 'Little Masters,' who in their small delicate miniature paintings followed a style which Dürer had occasion-

ally adopted, *e.g.* in his panel of the *Ten Thousand Martyrs*.

If Dürer represents the reactionary side of German Humanism—its austerity, its uncompromising insistence on Truth—truth to nature, and truth to conscience—Holbein represents its broader, more cultured side. Augsburg, his native city, was far more in touch with Italian culture than was quiet, quaint old Nuremberg. It was one of the wealthiest of German cities, a favourite resort of the Emperor, and in constant communication with Italy. Italian architects and artists had already done much work for its rich merchant princes when Hans Holbein was entering on manhood, and the influence of the Italian Renaissance was soon apparent, not only in his general style, but in his architectural backgrounds, and in his treatment of detail. He was the son of one of the best painters of the day, a man who had already caught more than a trace of the 'grand style' of Italy. But in spite of his father's name, and the patronage of the great Fuggers, the rich merchant family who played the part of the Medici in Augsburg, the ambitious young painter could barely make a living by his brush. He went, therefore, to Basle, the free busy Rhineland city, which was the centre of the new thoughts, and the gathering-place of German Humanists. Here he became the friend of the famous scholar-printer Froben, and through him of Erasmus. The demand for woodcuts and engravings was fast increasing with the spread of printing, and the young artist was privileged to be the illustrator of such epoch-making books as Luther's 'German Testament,' More's 'Utopia,' and Erasmus' 'Praise of Folly.' But even enlightened Basle was

Holbein, 1497-1543

becoming no less habitable for painters than the cities of Germany. The storm of the Reformation was reaching its height, and the wild scenes of the Peasants' War showed how violent were the passions that had been let loose. Holbein was no doubt influenced in his determination to come to England by the pleasant accounts his friend Erasmus gave of his stay in this country, and by his desire to see men of whom he had heard so much as he had of Sir Thomas More and his circle. It was to More's house that he went, introduced by a letter from Erasmus, and there he stayed for some time in friendly intercourse with the leaders of all that was best and newest in English thought. It is fortunate for us that Holbein's special gift was portraiture, for he has handed down to us the faces of all these men to whom we owe so much. There is the winning refined face of his host; Warham, so scholarly and strong; honest gentle Fisher; Erasmus; Colet; Sir Thomas Wyatt, and very many others. It was not until his later visit to England that he became Court Painter, and exercised his art on a circle which was brilliant in quite another sense. But, in dealing with Henry and his many loves, and with the nobles of the Court, he is still intellectual rather than sensuous, and with all his artistic enjoyment of the flash of jewels and the rich colouring of court robes, he never relaxes his keen close scrutiny, his determination to bring out the true character of his subject. Yet he fully shared in the love of the Renaissance for beautiful things. Not only would he paint the glitter of gold and silver ornaments, but (though he was not trained in the goldsmith's craft) he had a wonderful skill in designing such things; the jewelled cup he designed for Jane Seymour

being considered one of the most beautiful examples of Renaissance gold work.

He painted few religious pictures. The bent of his mind was towards Protestantism. But, like Erasmus, he saw both sides of the religious question, and if anything would have deterred him from becoming, like Dürer, an exponent of the Reformation, it would probably have been the sight of a frenzied Protestant mob destroying his own frescoes at Basle. His most famous religious picture is of course the *Meyer Madonna*, where our Lady stands with the Holy Child in her arms, in the midst of the kneeling family of Burgomaster Meyer, a picture significant of the religious phase which Holbein represented. The Virgin was drawn from his own wife idealised; she looks down at her worthy German compatriots, benign, dignified, but wholly human. Already the glory has departed. To Dürer she was no longer the *Sancta Dei Genitrix* of Bartolommeo or Raphael, but only Mary, a simple pious *Frau*. And when we remember how soon, in the wildness of reaction, the foulest taunts would be freely hurled at her, we almost wonder that in Holbein's picture she still wears a crown. But Holbein was no reactionary. He had far more sense of the fitness of things, far more dramatic instinct than true-hearted Dürer, and though he has brought Madonna down among men, he has given her a gracious, queenly dignity that well befits the crown. His true German inclination towards the mysterious and unearthly appears in his familiar *Dance of Death*, a series of woodcuts of a gruesome type which had been very popular in Europe since the terrible days of the Black Plague. Holbein left no school, either in Germany or

England. England was hardly yet ready to develop a native school, Germany still far too stormy. But the great painter undoubtedly gave a strong stimulus both to the appreciation and the practice of art in his adopted country. Many of the nobles began to follow the king's example in collecting pictures and encouraging such foreign artists as came to our shores.

CHAPTER IX

THE RENAISSANCE AND RELIGIOUS THOUGHT

So far our ways have lain in pleasant paths. We have noted a new joyousness pervading human life, a new interest in all its concerns, a new appreciation of the beauty of nature. We have seen the splendid enthusiasm, the heroic labours of the Humanists; we have listened to the soft voluptuous music of Italian poetry; we have been stirred by the rapture and passion of Shakespeare and Marlowe; we have laughed with Rabelais and Cervantes; we have watched the development of a new art, steeped in the glow of a new vivid life. We must now turn to the reverse of the medal, to see how bitter were the throes when modern liberty was born, how terrible sometimes was the clashing together of old thoughts and new. For a time of religious change is always a time of great suffering. There is not only the bitter persecution of bigotry and fanaticism, but there is the grief of those who are staunch to the old faith, when what seems to be blasphemy and sacrilege is offered to the things that they revere; there is the pain of thoughtful men when Reason inexorably calls upon them to sacrifice beliefs that they have cherished and by which they have lived; and

The Dark Side of the Renaissance

there is the bewildered, hopeless trouble of those simple ones who see the foundations of old authority crumbling away, and know not where amid the clash of rival sects to turn for guidance. Much of the suffering was caused by the sheer dread of heresy. To men trained in mediæval thought an erroneous belief was a deadly sin, a state of uncertainty was little better. They were consumed by a torturing desire to believe aright, and a torturing fear that Satan himself would interfere to obscure their judgment. In this aspect the Renaissance was a time of utmost pain and suffering, when 'through chinks that time had made' the new cold light of reason, that could neither be welcomed nor resisted, broke in and turned old and precious things to dust.

The increase of persecution

Then arose to heaven the smoke of innumerable fires—slow, cruel fires, cunningly prepared for the burning of heretics and witches. Then the dungeons of the Inquisition echoed with the strangled sobs, the agonised wild confessions, or the firmly-breathed defiance of tortured men, women, and children. This very time which saw the dawning emancipation of reason was, strangely enough, the time when the belief in witchcraft and sorcery was at its height. As the old safeguards were shaken; as strange stories of things unknown penetrated among the people, such as that of the solid earth moving round the sun; as plague and pestilence swept them off in thousands; they began to be shaken in their old childlike trust that the sign of the Cross or a few drops of holy water could render powerless the malignant spirits that might swarm round them. They were struck with panic terror, that blind insensate fear of an evil that

cannot be seized and grappled with, which drives men mad and goads them into reckless cruelties. Through the fifteenth and sixteenth centuries, side by side with increasing knowledge and refinement, this horror was gathering in strength. Not a child could sicken and die, not a farmer find disease among his beasts, but some one was held responsible for it.[1] Old men who lived among their books, or had some skill in herbs, were denounced as in league with the Devil. Thousands of poor feeble old creatures, men and women, were seized and tortured until their minds wandered, and in their agony they would shriek out anything that was demanded of them. These wild ravings were solemnly accepted as evidences of the truth of the most monstrous superstitions. In this gloomy warfare Protestants and Catholics were united for once, the English Puritans of the Commonwealth and the Scotch Presbyterians of the seventeenth century being not a whit less bitter than the superstitious Spaniards. It was an evil that could only be cured by the growing tendency, first manifested in Montaigne, to test all things by reason and common sense.

Chaotic condition of morals

The mental and moral condition of Europe during the fifteenth and sixteenth centuries can only be compared to a stream in flood, lashed by the fury of the winds, turbid with the mud stirred up from its depths, wild with the hurtling together of the great rocks which it has torn from their foundations, and

[1] See Lecky's *Rationalism in Europe*, vol. i. p. 46: 'All through the Middle Ages . . . the executions for witchcraft during six centuries were probably not as numerous as those which often took place during a single decade of the fifteenth and sixteenth centuries.'

which beat and grind relentlessly on one another. Not only was the loosening of old restraints made a cloak for licence and riot on the part of the wild lawless element of society, but in every class passion was raised to ungovernable heights. Men were seized with a mad craving for excitement, which could only be sated by wild orgies of cruelty and lust. The burning of a great company of Jews is considered a suitable spectacle for a King of Spain and his young bride at their marriage fêtes. A Sigismondo Malatesta, and a Henry VIII., pursue unchecked their career of murders and adulteries. Sinister rumours as to the lawfulness of tyrannicide are spreading among the people, who begin to feel their strength without realising their responsibilities. No religious heresy is too wild to attract fanatical adherents, and madness is becoming alarmingly frequent. It is evident that the new wine is bursting the old bottles. Grave perils threaten the Church. The discontent with the Papal government that has been seething through the centuries can no longer be repressed.

Dissatisfaction with the hierarchy—caused by

The Christian religion had necessarily been presented in a materialised form to people who had to be brought from barbarism to civilisation, and who had neither the power nor the means of reading. In this somewhat gross form it had become crystallised, and although the people had outgrown it, their teachers were too selfish, too idle, or too timid, to change it. Meantime a spirit of doubt and inquiry was making itself felt. The Crusades had opened men's minds to the reception of new ideas, while their failure had dealt a fatal blow to Papal

prestige. The discoveries of the adventurers had disproved many of the most dogmatic utterances of the priesthood, thus throwing discredit upon any others which seemed improbable. Natural science, taught by Arabs and Jews, though sternly discountenanced by the Church, was silently but steadily exercising its broadening influence on the minds of educated men, even among the higher ecclesiastics themselves. Taught by it, they began to see natural phenomena as the result rather of order and immutable law than of a succession of miracles.

the spirit of inquiry

With the spread of education other professions than that of the priesthood began to offer paths to distinction, and so the educated laymen, practically non-existent during the Middle Ages, had now to be reckoned with. The conduct of affairs of state no longer fell exclusively into the hands of ecclesiastics, and men who had a share or an interest in the government of their city or country were naturally less disposed to accept without criticism the government of the Church, especially if it seemed to come in conflict with the interests of the state. In the printing press, with its political and religious pamphleteering, there was arising an influence which was destined to eclipse entirely that of the pulpit.

the spread of education

We have already briefly noticed the influence of Humanism upon religious thought—that in Italy it was too self-absorbed to render any conscious service to liberalising ideas—except in the important matter of Lorenzo Valla's exposure of the pretended Donation of Constantine; but that in England and Germany almost the first result of the classical revival

and the Revival of Learning

was a new interest in the original texts of the Bible, and a practical tendency to test by their light the authoritative religion. Reuchlin studies Hebrew, points out errors in the Vulgate, and is bitterly persecuted. Erasmus edits the Greek Testament, and directs all the powers of his scathing satire against the ignorance and hypocrisy of the lower monastic orders. They, on their side, are quick to scent the danger that lies for them in the New Learning, and are clamorous in their opposition to it. A bitter and unequal war is waged, in which stupidity, sloth, and spite are pitted against the sarcasm and scorn of the cleverest men of the day. Some unkind wag of the Humanists (perhaps Ulrich von Hutten, perhaps Johann Jäger) writes the *Epistolæ Obscurorum Virorum* (1515) a series of letters purporting to emanate from the monks, in which their imbecility, their atrocious Latin, and their self-indulgent lives are caricatured with pungent and irresistible humour. To the huge delight of the scholars there are not wanting monks who point the joke by seriously taking the book as a defence of their order, and expressing their thorough approval of it.

Such are some of the circumstances which disposed men to adopt a criticising attitude towards the ecclesiastical system which had once inspired them with such submissive awe. And it must be confessed that the prevailing abuses were abundantly provocative of adverse criticism. The corrupt condition of the luxurious Papal Court at Avignon had brought home to scandalised Europe the condition of morality in the upper ranks of the hierarchy. The corruption of the head was not long in spreading to

Ecclesiastical Abuses

Immorality and Ignorance

the members. Under the influence of abbots who had learnt their morals in Italy, monasteries became, instead of centres of illumination, poisonous sores spreading infection all about them. The people complained that churches stood desolate and empty, or were held for some rich pluralist by *vicars* whose only qualification was their cheapness—men sprung, like the mass- and chantry-priests, from the dregs of the people, entirely ignorant both of the Scriptures and theology, and barely possessing enough Latin to say Mass. The majority of these men lived in secret or open concubinage. Indeed, as Mr. Froude observes, 'the laity were more worthy of respect than the clergy, for, having wives, they were less profligate; making no pretension to mysterious power, they were less hypocritical; moreover, it was possible for them to retain some amount of belief in, and reverence for, the priests, whereas the latter must have found it hard to believe in themselves.' Probably, however, it was not so much the immorality or even the cruelty of the hierarchy that aroused against it the indignation of Europe, and made the Reformation possible; but rather its avarice, for this touched every man nearly, and in a tender spot, his purse.

Avarice

The insatiable greed of the higher clergy, and the shameless extortion which it produced, were an old standing source of complaint. No great objection was made to the regular sources of wealth—the tithe, the revenue arising from landed estates, the vast sums paid as pious offerings and as the price of masses for the dead—even when, as in England, it was estimated that the taxes of Rome amounted to five times as much as those of the king, or when, as in Germany, a fourth part of the

whole country was in the possession of ecclesiastics.[1] But there were other more questionable means of gain, many of which pressed no less hardly on the lower clergy than on the laity. There were the unceasing levies made (no longer as a charity but as a right) by the mendicant friars; by the lower for their own subsistence, by the higher and wealthier for the building of churches and monasteries. There were the innumerable instruments of Papal extortion—annates, first-fruits, dispensations, reservations, and the rest. Then there was simony of a more flagrant kind, by which benefices were sold to the highest bidder. From the twelfth century onwards this evil was ever increasing in magnitude. In the time of Boniface IX. the same benefices were sold over and over again at the Papal Court. After each purchaser's money had been received, the benefice went to him who had paid most, and only then on his handing over another twenty-five florins for the 'Preference.'[2] And this was done quite openly under other Popes than Boniface. The Popes of the Renaissance carried on a thriving trade in Cardinal's hats, Alexander VI. making forty-three additions to the Sacred College in eleven promotions.[3]

Simony

Another abuse against which constant outcry was raised was that of Pluralities. Not only were livings held in plurality in our own country by Englishmen of position, such as Thomas Becket, who held an archdeaconry and several good livings before he was a priest; or Wykeham, who, before he was a bishop,

Pluralities

[1] Beard, *The Reformation*, p. 77.
[2] Milman, *Latin Christianity*, vol. viii. p. 74.
[3] Symonds, *Age of the Despots*, p. 378.

held the Archdeaconry of Buckingham, the Provostship of Wells, and twelve other prebends or canonries;[1] or some noble at the Court, who would hold half-a-dozen rich benefices without any orders at all. This might have been tolerated. But when the richest livings were bestowed with true papal generosity on Italians (sometimes the merest children) who had never set foot on our shores, indignation was aroused, not only among the people, but still more among the displaced native ecclesiastics, and many remonstrances were addressed by English bishops to the Pope. The same condition of things prevailed on the continent.

In vain protest after protest was made by men of weight and learning in the Church. In vain statute after statute was passed in the Northern Countries setting limits to ecclesiastical exactions. In vain did the General Councils of the fifteenth century pass in review and sift the taxes levied by the Pope. If here and there the supplies were cut off, the necessities of the Pontiffs became the more pressing. There was a luxurious Court to keep up, innumerable 'nephews' to carve out principalities for the temporalities of the Popedom to secure. In their short-sighted folly, wantonly defying the opinion of Europe, the Popes shamelessly pressed the vilest means of extortion they possessed, the sale of Indulgences. It was this traffic in sin that fanned into a blaze the long smouldering fire of Teutonic revolt. Luther was too modest and simple-minded a man, too loyal to his Church, to have deliberately set up his own judgment against that of his superiors on a point of doctrine. In

Indulgences

[1] *Latin Christianity*, vol. ix. p. 32.

opposing Tetzel, the indulgence-monger, whose methods were an outrage on all common-sense and decency, he never doubted that he would have the approval both of his Bishop and the Pope.[1] Not until he found that they not only winked at the indulgence traffic, but were pocketing a share of Tetzel's profits, was he roused to opposition of the whole Papal system. It was intolerable to men who were strenuously toiling along the path to perfection that pardon and licence for sin should be openly bought and sold in the market-place. 'It was,' as Dean Milman has said, 'in vain for the Church to assert that, rightly understood, Indulgences only released from temporal penances. . . . The language of the promulgators and vendors of the Indulgences, even of the Indulgences themselves, was, to the vulgar ear, the broad, plain, direct guarantee from the pains of purgatory, from hell itself, for tens, hundreds, thousands of years; a sweeping pardon for all sins committed, a sweeping licence for sins to be committed.'

Meanwhile it must not be supposed that the Church was blind to the evils that were sapping her strength. Never in her darkest times was she without men of earnest devotion and practical zeal—whether on the Papal throne, or among the lowest ranks of the friars—who strove to reawaken something of the old zeal. The establishment of each of the great orders had marked a step towards the old high monastic ideal. Cluniacs, Cistercians, Carthusians, each order aimed at a higher level of simplicity and austerity than its predecessors. Each relaxed its rigour as honour and years were

Attempted Reforms: (*a*) From Within

[1] Michelet, *Life of Luther*, p. 22.

added to it. It was in passionate protest against the whole business of clerical wealth and worldliness that St. Francis stripped himself of every possession, and sent out his disciples in true apostolic poverty to preach Christ among the people. It was to combat the same evil, and also the awful religious ignorance into which the world was apathetically sinking, that St. Dominic founded a similar order of Mendicants. And for many years the preaching friars had been the strength and stay of the Church. By their genuine devotion, their simplicity of life, their unwearying charity, they infused a new enthusiasm among all classes. The people loved the friars, who sympathised in their troubles, who nursed them in illness, even in the terrible plague which drove the more pompous secular clergy away from them, who administered the sacraments to them, and buried them, demanding no fees. At the same time, both Franciscans and Dominicans supplied Theology with some of its profoundest scholars. But the mendicant orders could not escape the ultimate decay which is the portion of all human institutions. It was fatally easy for any idle vagabond to join the outer orders of the mendicants, and to live on the extorted charity of the faithful. Every land became infested with sturdy unscrupulous beggars, who called themselves friars. The upper ranks, on one pretext or another, became endowed with the corrupting wealth that was so dreaded by their founders, and proved themselves no less grasping than the rest of the clergy. At the time of which we are writing there was no class that did not hate them heartily—the clergy for their meddling in parochial concerns, and coming between them and their

The Mendicant Orders

fees; the scholars for their obstinate ignorance; the people for their shamelessness and mendacity. Wiclif had no lack of influential support when he began his career by an unsparing attack, not only on the friars, but on the whole principle of Mendicancy.

St. Francis and St. Dominic had been staunch sons of the Church, who would have laid down their lives rather than tamper with one of her doctrines. The reform at which they aimed was, like that of Savonarola, the reformer of the Renaissance, purely disciplinary. But there were others, especially in Northern Europe, who ventured to criticise the whole ecclesiastical system, to appeal from Authority to Scripture, and to question the position of the priesthood, passing thence to the validity of the sacraments. Such were the Waldenses who, in the twelfth century, already held most of the opinions of modern Protestants. Such was Wiclif, one of the profoundest of Oxford's scholars, one of the subtlest of theologians; and yet, in expounding his anti-hierarchical views among the people, one of the simplest and most practical of preachers. Wiclif's teaching was of more importance than was indicated by any immediate result that it produced. Not only did it lie like seed in English ground, ready to germinate and bear fruit when the time should be ripe, but it was the doctrines of Wiclif which (through the medium of Richard II.'s Bohemian queen) passed to John Huss and Jerome of Prague, and kindled in them the spirit of revolt. Huss, indeed, was unshakably orthodox on almost every doctrinal point on which he was assailed, such as the Real Presence, and the Invocation of Saints; but he denounced the wealth and

(*b*) From Without

Wiclif, c. 1325-1384

corruption of the clergy, and with unflinching courage he died for his opinions at the stake. Jerome speedily followed his master, with the still higher courage that has had to contend for the mastery with the natural shrinking of the flesh.

(c) By Councils

But although the Council of Constance vindicated its orthodoxy by burning Huss and Jerome, this was partly because it had already shown unmistakable signs of an innovating spirit in itself. Strengthened by the anti-papal Teutonic element (the new system of voting by nations giving the English and Germans equal weight with the Italians) it had proved itself powerful enough to dethrone one pope (or, rather, three rival popes), and to establish another; and had maintained, at least in theory, its supremacy over 'even a lawful Pontiff of blameless character,'[1] and its right to reform the Church 'in its head as well as its members.' The attitude of the Council of Basle was still more independent; indeed, the spirit of this Council was eminently un-Italian and democratic. In the Bohemian war, kindled by the death of Huss, the fierce indomitable spirit of the Sclavs had almost succeeded in wresting a whole kingdom from the Papal rule; this, together with the unsettled condition of Germany, had thoroughly opened the eyes of thoughtful men to the necessity for reform. The question could no longer be played with. Although England was too much occupied by civil war to take any great part in the Council, although Germany awaited its result in haughty silence, everyone knew that in these countries and in the Netherlands, Protestantism (called by whatever name) was secretly rife. The Bohemians

[1] *History of Latin Christianity*, vol. viii. p. 257.

were appeased with slight concessions, and kept quiet with endless negotiations. The question of the celibacy of the clergy was discussed, and severe enactments were passed against their immorality. The Pope, who entirely declined to recognise the Council, was declared contumacious. It then proceeded to depose him, but by this time most of the more influential dignitaries had gone away, leaving only the minor clergy and their president, the democratic Cardinal Archbishop of Arles. We have to remember, too, in estimating the value of reforming councils, that they were chiefly composed of ecclesiastics, who had a keen eye for their own interests, and whose main object in diminishing the power of the Pope was to increase their own. The only result, therefore, for the Church at large might prove to be the exchanging of one tyranny for another.

By the beginning of the sixteenth century, in spite of all these efforts at reform, internal and external, the position of the Church was one of grave peril. The chaotic condition into which European morality had fallen was seen in its worst, because most painful, aspect in her. It was evident to all that a crisis was at hand. And to whom should the faithful turn in this time of perplexity and distress; who should pilot the Sacred Ark safely through the storm if not Christ's Vicar upon earth, he in whom dwelt the direct inspiration of the Holy Ghost, so that for him there could be no doubts, no uncertainties? Thousands of eager longing eyes are turned upon the Pope, watching to see him demolish the arguments of the heretics and vindicate his position and that of the Church. But what do they see? A dilettante Paul II., admiring his handsome person in the glass, and

The Popes of the Renaissance

collecting jewels and cameos and antiques; a Sixtus IV., quarrelling, fighting, grabbing at land to enrich his infamous nephews, forcing his subjects to buy rotten grain that he may profit, conniving at the foul sacrilegious murder of the two young Medici in the Duomo at Florence; an Innocent VIII., as self-indulgent, luxurious, and licentious as the others, and even more avaricious, setting up a bank at Rome where each sin has its price; an Alexander VI., making his name a byword and reproach for all ages to come by the unspeakable horror of his life; degraded by nameless lusts; black with the blood not only of his enemies, but of any prelate who had the misfortune to be rich, and whose death might give the Pope a chance to snatch his wealth; traitorously making a boon comrade of the Turk, the enemy of his Church and of Europe; a Julius II., storming Mirandola and embroiling all Italy in civil war; or a Leo X., a cultured man of the world, a patron of letters and art, pagan to the core, no longer troubling himself to keep up the hypocritical pretence of faith, but amusing his friends with blasphemous witticisms, and making life one long carousal—a carousal enriched by every resource of voluptuous art. Such were the Popes of the Renaissance, the men upon whom fell the awful responsibility of meeting and answering the claims of the Reformers.

The iniquities of the Papal Curia were not, of course, the iniquities of the Church. The Popes had after the schism deliberately lowered themselves to the level of Italian princes; and they shared the immorality of the Italian princes, only intensified by the glaring anomaly of their position. In Italy, as every-

The Moral Depravity of Italy

one knows, so far from there being any moral awakening at the time of the Renaissance, every step towards a higher civilisation was attended by an enfeeblement of the moral sense, until at last it died away altogether, and the strange and awful spectacle was presented to a horror-stricken world of its most brilliant and cultured people sunk unconscious and indifferent in a slough of foulest vice. We have already had occasion to notice the sinister fascination which the sins of beautiful Italy exercised over the imagination of northern Europe; how, with bated breath, terrible rumours were repeated of crimes which a by no means prudish age blushed to recount. It would profit us little to try to examine this dark side of the Italian Renaissance. We have no line that could fathom its bottomless depths; we have not the mental and moral (or immoral) equipment that would enable us to understand how men and women of refinement could listen with cultured interest to the obscenities that the Humanists raked up for them from old Pagan dust-heaps, or could look on with amused tolerance at the unspeakable devilries of a Cæsar Borgia. How altogether indifferent to it all the Italians were we have seen in the easy, languid grace of their literature, in which there is scarcely a shadow of the tragedies that were thrilling the rest of Europe with horror; in Machiavelli's entire unconsciousness that there was anything peculiarly villainous in his counsels; and in the purely ideal character of their paintings. We may see it too in the portraits of the men themselves—the Borgias, the Malatestas, the Baglionis—men who in our eyes are stained with murder, adultery, and fouler crimes, but who smile on in calm, cultured urbanity as if no evil

thought had ever marred the intellectual calm of their foreheads or the almost womanish beauty of their faces; for they were a handsome race, these demon princes of Italy.

It would be as logical to credit the Church with the foulness of Aretino as with the crimes of the Borgias; but at the same time the notorious depravity of the Papal Curia was one of the most powerful weapons in the hands of the Reformers. It is inevitable that the popular estimation of a society should be conditioned by the character of its chief representatives; the devout pilgrims who made their way with longing faith to the sacred city went home sorrowful and embittered; if this was the rock on which the Church was built, what of the Church? It was the rude disenchantment wrought by the sight of Rome upon Luther's youthful enthusiasm that decided him to abandon his monastic vows. In Florence, the home of art and scholarship, if there was less of gross vice, there was open paganism and indifference.

Suddenly, however, a disturbance breaks the cultured calm of Florentine society, so brilliant, so luxurious, so sceptical of any good; this society whose head is Lorenzo, the clever unscrupulous poet prince. In its midst appears a sombre white-robed figure, terrible in aspect, crying, like a second John Baptist, *Repent, repent, for the Kingdom of Heaven is at hand,* denouncing iniquity in high places, denouncing luxury and loose living, repeating everywhere the three-fold prophecy, '*The Church will be scourged, then regenerated, and this quickly.*' He is a man of strange and striking appearance, his face so strongly hewn, so worn

Savonarola, 1452-1498

and haggard with fasting and prayer and long wrestlings with his spirit, that it has passed the bounds of 'homeliness' and become almost fascinating in its sublime ugliness. For there is a hidden tenderness in the mobile mouth with the projecting under lip, and the black eyes that blaze with such fiery scorn under the beetling brows can be transfigured by yearning love for souls. Such was Savonarola, one of the strangest products of an age that excelled in the production of strange personalities.

The Florentines left their busy streets and markets, their workshops and their studios, to listen to this Ferrarese monk, whose voice, at first weak, acquired a compelling power that seemed almost supernatural, whose words, at first dry, cold, and scholastic, poured out at last in fiery streams of irresistible eloquence, whose powerful logic smote relentlessly through all their pretences, tearing away the films that hid them from themselves. As they listened the mocking smile died away, their eyes were opened to their danger; they shook with terror; with sobs and wails they followed the preacher wherever he went, hanging on his words as on their only hope. When their masters, the Medici, betrayed them and fled, they gave themselves unreservedly into his guidance, and for nearly three years submitted to his wise, peaceful, but severely Christian government. Paganising Florence declared Christ to be the head of the state; instead of Lorenzo's carnival songs, the streets resounded with hymns and lauds, sung by processions of children clothed in white. The people brought the things that they had loved and lived for, the things that represented the highest and best they had known, their books, their manuscripts, their

pictures, their precious things of silver and gold and inlaid work, and flung them into Savonarola's Bonfire of Vanities. And then—they were Italians, facile, emotional, easily stirred—they grew weary of a Puritanism that was ill-suited to their natures; they grew weary of being so desperately good, of wearing no finery, of seeing no pageants; they were frightened and harassed in their commercial dealings by the Papal ban which their monk had brought upon them; they wished he was less extreme, that he would be satisfied with what contented other men, and—they burnt him.

It was not the first time they had been roused to religious frenzy by the preaching of some earnest monk horror-stricken by the corruption that surrounded him. And much the same thing had occurred in other cities. Not to go back to John of Vicenza in the thirteenth century, who had set all quarrelsome Lombardy at peace, healing old feuds and restoring quiet to distracted cities, there was Fra Jacopo in Pavia in the fourteenth century, who had denounced usury and vice, and had died a martyr's death; there was San Bernardino, early in the fifteenth century, in Florence, who had denounced luxury and licentiousness, and had his Bonfires of Vanities. But Savonarola was something more than an impassioned preacher; he was a wise administrator and lawgiver, only erring in making his reforms too abrupt, in trying to do in a moment the work of years; and he was a prophet, if not by direct inspiration, as he and his followers sincerely believed, at least by an unusual power of ratiocination, of intuitively apprehending the direction in which events were tending. He differed from the northern Reformers in

being, like St. Francis and St. Dominic, absolutely faithful to the constitution of the Church; the reform at which he aimed was a purely moral one. He was not, like Erasmus and Colet, a Humanist; appreciating the dangerous influence of paganism, he clung to the old Scholasticism until he left both for the Bible. But he did not condemn the ancient philosophers unread, or Pico della Mirandola would not have been his friend, would not have flung his love-songs into the Bonfire, and have died a Piagnone in the white habit of the Dominicans. He was no enemy to art, although Fra Bartolommeo brought his pictures to help the blaze; but he hated the paganism that was corrupting art, and to counteract it he established a school of painters in his convent of St. Mark's. Here Bartolommeo painted on after his great master's death, but Botticelli never touched a pencil again. It was in Michael Angelo that Savonarola's influence and memory were best perpetuated. These two and their great predecessor and inspirer, Dante, stand out high above the crowd of brilliant Italians of the Renaissance, linked together by their austere rectitude, their passionate patriotism, their moral grandeur.

Savonarola's attitude towards the Papacy was certainly not a logical one. How could a man be logical who was unswervingly loyal to the organisation of the Church, while Roderigo Borgia sat in the Fisherman's Chair as Alexander VI.? We can hardly blame Savonarola for inconsistency in his unsuccessful attempts to distinguish between Alexander as Pope and Alexander as man, when we take into consideration his character and training, and the circumstances of his life. The case was altogether different with the northern Reformers. As we have several times hinted,

the spirit of Protestantism had been latent for centuries among the Teutonic nations. There had never been in Germany, England, or the Netherlands, that unquestioning acceptance of Papal administration that had prevailed in Italy. It had long been evident that their separation from the Roman jurisdiction was only a question of time. At the end of the fifteenth century that time had come, and it was the general feeling of Germany, of her princes as well as her peasants, to which Luther gave utterance. And yet, though the time was so ripe that Zwingli had begun to preach Protestantism before he had so much as heard of Luther; though it was said, with much truth, that it was Erasmus who had laid the egg which Luther hatched, it is not without reason that Luther dominates the whole movement in our eyes. The work which he did, with all its mingling of good and ill, could have been accomplished by no other of the leading men of his time. Erasmus, who towers above all his contemporaries in intellectual power, could never have brought about the Reformation, in spite of his clear insight, and his indignation with ecclesiastical abuses. In all movements which affect great masses of people, it is found that they will test for themselves the two extremes before they settle down to a chosen course. The man who would lead the people must be an extreme man—a man who has the strength of mind resolutely to shut his eyes to any other aspect of the question than his own; a man who is not too far removed by elevation of soul from the people he desires to lead; a man who is not too squeamish, too unwilling to proceed to violence. Such was Luther; such was not Erasmus. *Erasmus est homo*

The Teutonic Reformers

Luther, 1483-1546

pro se, one of the *obscuri viri* is made to complain. A refined, highly educated man of letters, broad-minded and tolerant, he saw with prophetic eyes the position of Reason as the mistress of modern thought. Like Colet and More, his hope lay in learning; he trusted that the study of the Scriptures and the light of fresh knowledge would gradually cause the evils to shrivel away and so effect a purification. Luther's bellowing denunciations, his distrust of learning, his fanatical hatred of reason, made it impossible for them to work together. Erasmus, again, saw too plainly the perilous tendencies of both Protestantism and Catholicism to range himself wholly with either. His vast theological learning made him sceptical as to the advantage of conceding the right of private judgment to each unaided human intellect. He would have smiled, perhaps, could he have foreseen that while the result of advancing science and increasing knowledge would be, on the one hand, to depress the human unit from a grand central supremacy to a position of absolute insignificance in the scheme of the universe, it would, on the other hand, give to the intellectual capacity of that same unit an authoritative power once supposed to belong to the especial revelation of God, as interpreted by the concentrated wisdom of ages, with the satisfactory result that no modern is too uninstructed to be prepared to lay down the final truth on any subject, however vast, connected with his (or any other person's) religion.

Erasmus, 1466-1536

It does not come within the scope of this small volume to give an account of the Reformation. We have but to notice briefly its general relation to the progress of thought, and perhaps we shall do this most readily by considering

some of the limitations of the Reformation. First, then, it was not—in intention, whatever its ultimate results—a revolt of Reason against Authority. The Reformers were especially concerned to make it plain, that so far from breaking away from Authority, they were reverting to the one true Authority, the written Word of God; that so far from abandoning precedent, they were ruled by a higher and more ancient precedent, the Primitive Church. Nothing was further from their thoughts than the substitution of common sense for dogma. It was on minute questions of dogma that Europe was rent into factions. They were questions of dogma that divided the Reformers and made them almost more bitterly hostile to one another than to the system they all attacked. The Reformation did, indeed, prepare the way for freedom of opinion, but not consciously. It did so because its influence was not strong enough to rivet its own bonds on men's minds in place of those it had shattered.

The Reformation not a substitution: (a) of Reason for Authority

Even Zwingli, the most open-minded and practical of the Reformers, gave no wider liberty to individual practice and opinion in religion than was afforded within the limits of a literal interpretation of the Bible, enforced by a minute system of civic control. Luther never disguised his fear and distrust of the unaided power of Reason. His naturally logical mind perceived that if he once submitted himself to its guidance he would be led into regions whither his conscience would not let him go. Hence inevitably arose that inconsistency which so mars his character. His canon was that reason was to be followed as far as the Scriptures and no further. Once within their sacred

ground Faith must take its place, and 'wring the neck of Reason and strangle the beast which else the whole world with all creatures could not strangle.' And yet he himself boldly criticises the Bible; condemns the story of Jonah as 'lying and absurd,' the Epistle of St. James as 'a letter of straw,' the Apocalypse as neither 'prophetic nor apostolic.' There were indeed many times when Faith and Reason would struggle for mastery in the great soul of the Reformer, when he would be 'tossed about in death and hell,' 'driven about by storms and tempests of despair;' times when he found it very hard to 'overcome and strangle Reason, that all cruellest and most fatal enemy of God.'[1] Such struggles he put down to the direct agency of Satan; and, indeed, so similar is the language which he applies to Reason and to the Devil, that it is often difficult to tell to which he refers.

nor (*b*) of Toleration for Bigotry

It follows naturally from this attitude towards Reason that the Reformation cannot be regarded as a movement in favour of Toleration against Bigotry. It is true that the right of the individual conscience was one of the chief doctrines of the Reformers. 'Belief,' says Luther, 'is an individual work, thereto can no man be compelled'; 'Heresy can never be kept off by force.' But when we ask whether the Protestants showed among themselves that toleration which they demanded from others, we are confronted by certain stubborn facts. Luther's persistent refusal to hold out the right hand of brotherhood to Zwingli; his merciless denunciation of the Anabaptists, which, remembering his proneness to exaggerated speech and the real tenderness of his heart, it is

[1] See *Beard on the Reformation*, Lecture V.

kinder not to repeat; Zwingli's own attitude towards the same unfortunate heretics; and Calvin's 'Constitution' at Geneva, which was practically a Protestant Inquisition, and showed itself so in the burning of Servetus for his heretical opinions on the Trinity, an act which will ever remain the saddest blot on the fair fame of the Reformation. The Protestants, in fact, 'upheld the right of private judgment while they burnt those whose judgment differed from their own.' They did indeed show a more intolerant spirit than the contemporary Catholics, though they had less opportunity of enforcing it by persecution; and persecution on the part of the advocates of free opinion was far more deliberate and self-conscious than it was on the part of the ancient Church. It has always been found so easy, by merely changing the word 'heresy' into 'blasphemy,' for men to justify an attitude of intolerance towards others which is bitterly resented when adopted towards themselves. In justice to Luther, we must remember that it was very exasperating to him who, with such dire misgivings, such fierce inward wrestlings, had made the first steps along the path of freedom, to see others, as he says, 'rushing along the beaten road to attack the Pope with such fierceness and freedom,' and not only rushing along the road, but breaking down the hedges, nay, making new roads, short cuts, for themselves. Luther felt himself responsible for the Reformation to a far greater extent than was really the case. He felt that he had a right to direct its course, to be, in fact, a kind of Protestant Pope. He little realised the disintegrating force of the new opinions. Once released from the narrow groove of tradition, it was inevitable that men's minds should fly in

different directions. There could be no such unity in freedom as there had been in bondage. Luther had loosened a stone from the dam; it was more than one man's strength could do to guide the outward rush of pent-up waters. Protestantism, as its name implies, has no such consolidating force as is possessed by Catholicism. It is the tendency of the one to cohere into a solid mass about a definite centre; of the other to expand, to form fresh off-shoots which break off and become new starting places. It is by this principle of decentralisation that Protestantism, intolerant itself, has paved the way (still unconsciously) for modern toleration. For when sects have become very numerous the interests of the community become too complicated and intertwined for bitter persecution to be possible; boundaries tend to disappear, and finally we find, instead of a strict dogmatic system, a flexible faith that admits of many shades of opinion.

Lastly, we have to notice that the Reformation by no means brought about an immediate purification of morals.

nor (c) of Morality for Immorality

European society in the sixteenth century was too deeply sunk in moral corruption to be easily raised. It was as convenient then as now to make unorthodoxy in religious opinion an excuse for laxity in morals. Hundreds of dissolute monks and nuns were only too glad to avail themselves of Luther's example; to throw off bonds that had become irksome, and exchange secret vice for open profligacy, so bringing disgrace upon the Protestant cause. It was not easy for the first generation of Protestants to determine where to draw the line in emancipating themselves from the old bonds. Even the leaders found themselves unable—to quote Luther's own

words—'to set themselves in opposition to men marrying several wives, or assert that such a course is repugnant to the Holy Scripture'; and accordingly we find the names of Luther, Melanchthon, Bucer, and four other leaders of reform appended to a document which gave permission to the Landgrave of Hesse to have two wives 'so that it was done secretly.' At the same time the purity and sweetness of Luther's own home-life is too well known to require dwelling on here. But the Anabaptists, in their mad travesty of religious freedom, only pushed to its farthest the doctrine of individualism, while Luther's central tenet, justification by Faith, in its separation of the spiritual from the practical side of man's life, is, of course, hardly less susceptible of a dangerous interpretation than is his denial of the freedom of the will.

The attitude of the Germans towards immorality was, however, very different from that of the Italians. They did recognise the brute that lurks in man's nature, and recognising it they loathed it and fought with it. Dürer drew it in bestial form creeping upon his Knight.[1] Luther has recorded many a stormy altercation which he had with it, many a bit of rough satire which he flung at it. The Teutons bore on their rough faces the marks of a battle which the smooth, smiling Italians never passed through. The difference of attitude appears in the literary and artistic productions of the two races; German work, while often gross and indecent, never having the soft seductive sensuality of Italian.

There were many circumstances that contributed to make the Reformation in England a very much less com-

[1] In the *Knight, Death, and the Devil.*

plex matter than it was in Germany. The English had always been able, more or less, to hold the Pope at arm's length, and though they had at various times been stirred to 'strong indignation' by ecclesiastical greed or misrule, still those abuses which inflamed the passion of the German people against the Church were far less rank in this country. The people were fairly unanimous as to what was wanted in the way of reform. Their demands were simple and practical, and the principal part in carrying them out was played, not by a theologian, but by a king. Henry was a true son of the Renaissance in his extraordinary mixture of reckless animalism, cruelty, practical statesmanship, learning and devotion. He was firmly determined that while an end was to be put to Papal interference, the continuity of the Church in England was not to be impaired. Fortunately this accorded with the desire of the majority of his people, for Henry's will was a remarkably powerful instrument. He was aided by the friendship and advice of several of the most clear-headed and thoughtful men of the day. But in spite of these favourable auspices, England was not destined to work out her reform in entire peace. Henry violently lays hands on the religious houses—great as well as small, of unblemished as well as ill repute—on a pretence of virtuous indignation which has never deceived anyone; Mary, in her blind bigotry and her fanatical devotion to the Papacy and Spain, tries to force the Catholic Reaction on a race of men who gladly go to the stake rather than endure it. Protestant reformers from Germany and Switzerland (or perhaps their writings smuggled in bales of cloth) fire the minds of the people

Reform in England

with wilder and more revolutionary doctrines, and England, too, has to feel the storm and stress of religious strife.

Meantime the great and ancient society to which had been dealt so many crushing blows was gathering herself together. With an energy that shows her immense latent strength and elasticity she had already re-established her hold upon the southern nations. Not too arrogant or shortsighted to learn a salutary lesson from her fall, she determined that an end should be put to the crying evils that had made her a by-word in Europe. The reforming Council of Trent sat in 1545, and thenceforward no Borgia sat on the Papal throne; Christ's Vicar on earth was at least a man of decent, sober life, and clerical morality ceased to be the butt of every satirist. The Spaniards were now masters in Italy, and with all the force of their fiery fanatical temper they helped Rome to reassert her power, not only as a temporal power among the now enfeebled Italian states, but as the seat of infallible authority. To Spain she owed the Jesuits,[1] the most magnificently disciplined, devoted, resistless army monarch ever owned; and also the terrible Inquisition,[2] the mere shadow of which drove poor Tasso mad, and which crushed out of Italy all sound learning and original thought. Thus was heresy stamped out of Southern Europe. It is often said that persecution, by producing reaction, fails in its object. But, as Machiavelli knew, persecution only fails when it is not thorough. The Inquisition made no mistakes. If

The Catholic Reaction

Counter Reformation

Jesuits

Inquisition

1 The order was sanctioned by the Pope in 1540-3.

2 The Inquisition was re-established in Rome in 1542.

it did not kill its victims it left them too crushed and weak to have any sting. It paralysed the people with terror, so stealthy, so powerful, so relentless, was its working. Men dared not whisper of heresy in their most secret chambers. But there was little of the heretical spirit in Italy. Her people were glad enough to be undisturbed in the possession of the form of religion that was most congenial to their nature; her men of science and learning were already accomplished in the art of holding two sets of opinion—the religious and the philosophic—without being disturbed by their contradictions. And so we leave this gifted nation, whose brilliant career we have traced through three centuries of creative energy, in which she initiated modern culture, and was the school for all Europe. Now, when the northern nations were just entering upon the full glory of the Renaissance, she was sinking with a languid, somewhat cynical acquiescence into the hands of Spain and Rome.

INDEX

Abelard, 15
'Advancement of Learning'—Bacon, 124
Agricola, 55
Alberti, Leo Battista, 37, 51, 72, 182
Albertus Magnus, 15
Albigenses, Persecution of the, 5, 19
Alcalà, University of, 67
Alcazar of Toledo, the, 191
Aldegraver, 262
Aldine Press, 52
Aleman, 138
Alexander VI., 274, 281, 286
Alexandrine verse, 97
Alfonso, King of Naples, 48
Amadeo, Antonio, 201
Amadis of Gaul, 75, 127
'Aminta'—Tasso, 149
'Amoretti'—Spenser, 120
'Amours'—Ronsard, 96
Amyot, 97
Anabaptists, the, 293
Anet, Château of, 190
Angelico, Fra, 221, 222
Anselm, 4
Antwerp, 32
'Apologie for Poetrie'—Sidney, 111, 113
Aquinas, Thomas, 15
Arabs in Spain, the, 15, 17, 18, 127, 271
'Arcadia'—Sannazaro, 81
Sidney, 111, 112
Aretino, 78, 79, 104, 148, 149
Argyropulus, 55
Ariosto, 76, 77, 104, 148
Aristotle, 14, 15, 39, 47, 62
Arthur, Legends of, 10, 75
Ascham, Roger, 65, 103, 111, 115
Assisi, Church of St. Francis at, 217
'Astrophel and Stella'—Sidney, 104, 113, 114
Aubigné, d', 97, 98
Augsburg, 33, 212, 263
Autos sacramentales, 173, 176
Avignon, Papal Court at, 7, 272

Bacon, Francis, 25, 27, 99, 111, 123-125
Roger, 25
Badius, 56

Baïf, 97
'Ballad of Fair Women'—Villon, 87
'Ballad of the Hanged'—Villon, 87
Bandello, 80
Baptistery gates, the, 197, 198
Barbosa, Arias, 67
Bartas, du, 97
Bartolommeo, Fra, 224, 226, 286
Basle, 263
Basle, Council of, 279
Basochiens, the, 92, 144
Beaufort, Henry, Bishop of Winchester, 57
Beaumont, 165, 166
Becket, Thomas, 4, 274
Bellay, Joachim du, 85, 94, 96
Belleau, 94
Bellini, Gian, 234, 235
Bembo, 53, 60, 79, 104
Bermudez, 148
Berni, 79
Black Death, the, 20
Blackfriars Company, 153
Theatre, 152
Boccaccio, 41, 71, 72, 79
Boethius, 14, 39
Boiardo, 76, 79
Bologna, Gian, 203
Spanish college at, 67
Boscan, 129, 130
Botticelli, 185, 222, 223, 286
'Bradamante'—Garnier, 148
Brahe, Tycho, 26
Bramante, 185
Brancacci Chapel, 222
Brandt, Sebastian, 140
Brantôme, 98
Breton, 123
Bruges, 32
Brunelleschi, 181, 185, 197, 198, 219
Bruno, 26, 27, 84
Budæus, 56, 57, 66
Buonarotti, Michael Angelo, 51, 185, 204-209, 226, 230-232, 286
Burbadge, 152
Burckmair, Hans, 262
Byzantium, 28, 251

Cabot, 25
Calderon, 175, 176
Calvin, 66, 291
Cambrai, Treaty of, 84, 235
Cambridge, 59, 62, 65
Campo Santo at Pisa, 20, 218
'Canace'—Speron Sperone, 147
Cano, Alonso, 213
'*Capitoli*,' 79
Captives of M. Angelo, 190, 207
Caravaggio, 241
Castile, Literature of, 19, 128, 129
Catholic Reaction, 54, 138-140, 295
Caxton, 58
'Celestina, La,' 167, 168
Cellini, 185, 203, 204
'Cent Nouvelles Nouvelles,' 91
Cervantes, 94, 127, 132-134, 137, 169, 174
Chalcondylas, 59
Chansons de geste, 18
Roland, 76

Chapman, 54, 121, 166
Charlemagne, 78
Legends of, 10, 76
Charles VIII., his expedition into Italy, 74, 75, 88, 247
Chastellain, 89
Cheke, 65
Children of St. Paul's, 154
of the Chapel Royal, 152, 153
Chivalry, 10, 76
Chrysoloras, Manuel, 41
Cicero, 40-42, 47, 62
Cimabue, 217
'Cleopatre'—Jodelle, 148
Clere—Surrey's epitaph on, 106
Clouet, François, 249
Jean, 248
Colet, 59-61
Collèrye, Roger de, 91
Cologne, Early Masters of, 259
Colonna, Vittoria, 78, 208
Columbe, Michel, 209
Columbus, Christopher, 25, 126
Comedia, Spanish, 172, 173
Comedy, Classical, 148, 150
Commines, Philippe de, 86
'Company of Courtly Makers,' 107
'Conceptistas,' the, 137
Confrairie de la Passion, 143
Constantinople, 40
Fall of, 44
Constance, Council of, 279
Copernicus, 26
Cordova, 18
Correggio, 226, 230
Cortes, 126
Countess of Pembroke, 111
'Courtly Wits,' the, 107
Courts of Love, 11
Crétin, 89
Croke, 65
Crusades, the, 11-13, 270
'Cultos,' the, 137
'Curtain' Theatre, the, 152

Dance of Death of Holbein, 26
Dante, 20, 22, 36, 37, 69, 70, 77, 286
Daurat, 94
David of Donatello, 199
'Decameron'—Boccaccio, 71, 79
'Deffense et Illustration'—Du Bellay, 94, 97
Dekker, 122, 123, 166
Deventer, School at, 55
Diana and her Dogs of Goujon, 211
'Diana Enamorada'—Montemayor, 81, 137
'Didon'—Jodelle, 148
'Divine Comedy'—Dante, 69
Donatello, 197, 198, 219
Donatus, 39
'Don Quixote,' 132, 134
'Dragontea'—de Vega, 135
Drayton, Michael, 120
Drummond, 120
Duns Scotus, 15
Dürer, Albrecht, 212, 260-263, 265, 293
Dyer, Edward, 115

'Eclogues' of Juan de la Enzina, 168

École des Clouets, 248
Ecouen, 190, 210
'Edward II.'—Marlowe, 155, 158
Elizabeth, 25, 30, 65, 101, 107
Elizabethan architecture, 192
'Encomium Moriæ'—Erasmus, 62
Enfans sans Souci, 92, 144
'England's Helicon,' 108
Entombment of Christ of Van der Weyden, 253
Enzina, Juan de la, 168
Epistolæ Obscurorum Virorum, 272
'Epithalamion' — Spenser, 119
Erasmus, 48, 55-57, 59-62, 261, 263, 264, 272, 287, 288
Erigena, 14, 39
Escurial, the, 191, 243, 244
'Essays' of Bacon, 124
Montaigne, 99
Estiennes, the, 56
Etaples, d', 56
'Eugène'—Jodelle, 150
'Eulenspiegel'—Murner, 140
'Euphues'—Lyly, 104, 115
Euphuism, 85, 114, 115
'Everlasting Gospel,' The, 21
'Every Man in his Humour'—Jonson, 31, 163
Eyck, Jan van, 239, 254
Hubert van, 253

Fabliaux, 18
'Faerie Queene' — Spenser, 116, 119
Farce, the, 144, 145, 151
Fastnachts-spiel, the, 145
Faust, 30
'Faustus'—Marlowe, 155
Ferdinand and Isabella, 125, 239
Feudal System, 8, 9, 10, 13, 31, 32
Ficino, 47
Fiesole, 50
Filelfo, 42
'Flagellants,' the, 20
Flamboyant architecture, 179
Fletcher, John, 165, 166
Florence, 24, 35, 36, 41
Florentine architecture, 180, 181
art, 232, 233
Florentines, the, 36, 82, 284
Fontaine de Beaume of Columbe, 209
des Innocents of Goujon, 210
Fontainebleau, 189, 204
Ford, 166
Fouquet, Jean, 246
'Franciade'—Ronsard, 96
Francis I., 30, 66, 88, 189, 204
Fraticelli, the, 20
Froben, 263
Fuggers of Augsburg, the, 13, 263

GALEN—translated by Linacre, 59
Galileo, 26, 27, 84
Gama, Vasco da, 25
'Gammer Gurton's Needle,' 151
Garcillasso, 130
'Gargantua and Pantagruel'—Rabelais, 92

Garnier, 148
Gascoigne, George, 107, 110, 150
Gentile, 185
'Geraldine,' Sonnets to, by Surrey, 106
Ghent, 251
Ghiberti, 185, 197, 198
Ghirlandajo, 185, 223, 224
Giorgione, 235, 236
Giotteschi, the, 218
Giotto, 23, 180, 217, 218
'Globe' theatre, 153
Gnostics, the, 29
'Golden Age'—Balbuena, 138
Góngora, 85, 115, 136, 137
'Gorboduc'—Sackville and Norton, 147, 151
'Gorgious Gallery of Gallant Inventions,' 108
Goujon, 210, 211
Gourmont, 56
Granada, 18
Conquest of, 32, 125
Grand Canal of Venice, 180, 184
Greene, 104, 122, 123, 154, 156-158
Gregory the Great, 39
Greville, Fulke, 115, 116
Grey, Lady Jane, 66
Gringore, 144
'Groatsworth of Wit'—Greene, 158
Grocyn, 53, 59
Guarini, 84, 149
Guelfs and Ghibellines, feud between, 8, 35
Guevara, 115
Guicciardini, 82, 83
'Guzman de Alfarache'—Aleman, 138

Haddon Hall, 188
'Hamlet'—Shakespeare, 160
'Handefulle of Pleasant Delites,' 108
Harvey, Gabriel, 97, 112, 123
William, 26
Hegius, 54
Henry VIII., 60, 62, 65, 294
Henry of Navarre, 97
'Heptameron'—Margaret of Angoulême, 91
Hermonymus of Sparta, 56
'Hero and Leander'—Marlowe, 120
Chapman, 121
Heywood, Henry, 144
Hildebrand, 6
Historians, English, 122
Italian, 81-84
Holbein, 263-265
Holinshed, 122
Holy Roman Empire, 7, 35
Homer—translated by Boccaccio, 41
Chapman, 121
Hooker, 111
Humphrey, Duke of Gloucester, 58
Huss, John, 23, 278, 279
Hutton, Ulrich von, 272

Illuminators of Paris, 245
Tourraine, 245, 246
Flanders, 251
'Index Expurgatorius,' 169
Indulgences, 275, 276

Innocent III., 5
VIII., 281
Inquisition, 5, 135, 138, 139, 177, 240, 268, 295, 296
Investitures, War of, 8
Isabella and Ferdinand, 125, 239
'Istoria d'Italia'—Guicciardini, 83

Jacopo, Fra, 285
Jerome of Prague, 278, 279
'Jerusalem Conquistada'—De Vega, 135
Joachim of Flora, 21
Jodelle, Etienne, 94, 148
John of Ravenna, 41
Jones, Inigo, 187, 193, 194
Jongleurs, the, 19

Kepler, 26

Landgrave of Hesse, 293
Langius, 55
Langton, 4
Languedoc, 11
Larivey, 150
Lascaris, 56
Last Judgment of Michael Angelo, 208
Latimer, 59
Laura, Petrarch's sonnets to, 70
'Lazarillo de Tórmes'—Mendoza, 132
Lebrisca, 67
Leicester, Earl of, 152
Leo X., 45, 48, 53, 281
Leon, Louis de, 67, 139
Lescot, 186, 190
Linacre, 53, 59
Lippo Lippi, 221
Lisbon, 244
'Little Masters,' the, 262
Lodge, 122, 123, 154
Loire, *Châteaux* of the, 188
Louis XI., 31, 86, 88
Louvres, 189
Love, Courts of, 11, 19
Lübeck, 212
Lucan, 39
Luther, 275, 276, 289-293
Lutherans, the, 65
Lydgate, 109
Lyly, John, 115, 122, 154
Lyric poetry of England, 121
Spain, 137

'Macbeth'—Shakespeare, 161
Machiavelli, 36, 46, 82-84, 148
Madonna of Cimabue, 217
Magellan, 25
Maire, Jean le, 89
Mantegna, 224
Margaret of Angoulême, 90, 91
Valois, 98
Mariana, 67, 139
Marini, 84
Marlowe, 77, 120, 154-160, 202
Marot, Clement, 89, 90
Jean, 89
Marriage in Cana of Veronese, 237
Marston, 166
Martin Marprelate controversy, 123
Masaccio, 222
Masque, the, 164, 165
Massinger, 166

Matsys, Quentin, 251
Jan, 255
Mausoleum of Julius II., 206
Medea Colleoni, Tomb of, 201
Medici, Catherine de', 97
Cosmo de', 45, 46
family, the, 13, 45, 46
their expulsion from Florence, 53, 82
Giulio de', 207
Lorenzo de', 45, 51, 73-75, 205, 283
his circle, 50, 60, 77
Piero de', 75
Meistersingers, 19
Melanchthon, 60, 66, 293
Mena, Juan de, 129
Mendicant orders, 277, 278
Mendoza, Diego de, 131
Mercury of Gian Bologna, 202
'Mère Sotte,' 144
Michael Angelo. *See* Buonarotti
Middleton, 161, 166
Minnesingers, 19
Mino da Fiesole, 200, 201
Miracle plays, 143, 144
Mirandola, Pico della, 47, 51, 286
'Mirror for Magistrates'—Sackville, 109
Miscellanies, 108
Molinet, 89
Monna Lisa, 228
Montaigne, 31, 87, 98, 99
Montañes, 213
Montemayor, George de, 81, 137
Montluc, 98
Moors in Spain, the, 17, 18, 31
Morales, 241
Moralities, 143, 144
More, Sir Thomas, 59-64, 264
'Morgante Maggiore'—Pulci, 76
Moses of Michael Angelo, 207
Murillo, 244
Murner, 140
'Mysteries,' 143, 144

Naharro, Torres, 168
'Names of Christ'—Luis de Leon, 139
Naples, Spanish at, 129
'Narrenschiff'—Brandt, 140
Nash, 156
Naturalisti, 241, 242
Niccoli, Niccolo de', 42, 45
Nicholas V., 48, 49
Northern migrations, 2
Norton, 147
Novellieri, 80
Nuremberg, 33, 212, 259

Occam, 14
'Odes'—Ronsard, 95, 96
Orcagna, 185, 197, 218
'Orfeo'—Politian, 149
'Orlando Furioso'—Ariosto, 77
'Orlando Innamorato'—Boiardo, 76, 79
Orme, De l', 186, 190
Orsammichele, Tabernacle of, 197
Oxford, 15, 57-59

Palladio, 186
Palmerins, Stories of the, 127
Pamphleteers, the, 123

'Panurge,' 93
'Paradise of Daynty Devises,' 108
Paradise of Tintoretto, 237
Paris, Dramatic companies of, 143, 144
Royal College at, 66
University of, 15, 55
Parker, Archbishop, 122
Pastoral drama, 149
romance. *See* Romance
'Pastor Fido'—Guarini, 149
Paul II., 280
'Paul of Segovia'—Quevado, 136
Peele, 156, 157
Periers, des, 91
Perpendicular architecture, 179
Perréal, Jean, 246, 247
Perugino, 185, 224-226
Perseus of Cellini, 204
Petrarch, 40, 41, 70, 71
Petrarchists, 79, 104
Petrarquistas, 131
Philip IV. of Spain, 243
Picaresque novel, the, 132, 138
Pierre Pathelin, 143
'Piers Plowman,' 20
Pietà of Michael Angelo, 206
Pilon, 211
Pirkheimer, 261
Pisano, Andrea, 197
Giovanni, 196, 197
Niccola, 24, 179, 195, 196, 216
Pizarro, 126
Plato, 39, 40, 47, 63
Plautus, 141, 148
Plays, Religious, 142-145
Secular offshoots from, 143-145
'Pleasure reconciled to Virtue'—Ben Jonson, 165
Pleiade, 94-96, 148
Pluralities, 274
Poggio Bracciolini, 42, 43, 57
Poitiers, Diane de, 190
Politian, 51, 52, 59, 60, 73, 74
Politiques, the, 98
Porphyry, 14
Portogallo, Cardinal di, Tomb of, 201
'Praise of Folly'—Erasmus, 263
'Première Semaine'—Du Bartas, 97
'Prince, The'—Machiavelli, 46, 83
Provençal poetry, 18, 19, 128
Pulci, 76

Quercia, della, 197, 201
Quevado, 69, 126
Quintilian, 43, 44

Rabelais, 92, 93
Raleigh, Sir Walter, 37, 107, 117, 122
'Ralph Royster Doister'—Udall, 151
'Rape of Lucrece'—Shakespeare, 120
Raphael, 185, 226, 228, 229
Ravenna, John of, 41
Regnier, 99
'Regrets'—Du Bellay, 96
Reliquary of St. Ursula of Memling, 254

Rembrandt, 257, 258
Resurrection of Signorelli, 225
Reuchlin, 53, 55, 56, 60, 272
Rhétoriqueurs, the, 89
Rincon, 240
Robbia, Luca della, 200
Girolamo della, 189
Roman de la Rose, 89
Romance, Chivalric, 132, 137
Pastoral, 80, 81, 137
Romano, Giulio, 232, 235
Rome, 24, 53, 180
Sack of, 54, 69, 189
Ronsard, 94-96, 249
Roses, Wars of, 10, 101
'Rosmunda'—Rucellai, 147
Rossellino, 201
Rosso, 189, 247
Rubens, 244, 255-257
Rucellai, 147
Rueda, Lope de, 169, 170

Sachs, Hans, 140, 145
Sackville, 109, 147
'Sacra Rappresentazione,' the, 145
Sacristy of S. Lorenzo, 206-208
Sadoleto, 53
'Sad Shepherd'—Jonson, 164
Salamanca, University of, 67
San Bernardino, 285
Sanchez, 67
'Sancho Panza,' 134
Sannazaro, 81
Santillana, Marquis of, 67, 129, 239
Sanzovino, 186, 203
Sarto, Andrea del, 226, 247
'Satyre Menipée,' 98
Savonarola, 283-286
Scholasticism, 14-17, 37, 38, 54, 67
Schongauer, 259
'Schoolmaster' — Ascham, 103
Schoolmen, the, 16, 27, 40, 47
'Seconde Semaine'—Du Bartas, 97
Seneca, 39, 67, 141, 146
Servetus, 291
Sicily, Court of Frederick II. in, 15
Shakespeare, 117, 120, 158-162
'Shepherd's Calendar,' 81, 116
Sidney, Sir Philip, 76, 81, 107, 110-116, 118, 153
Signorelli, 224, 225
Simony, 274
Sistine Chapel, 206, 230, 231
Sixtus IV., Tomb of, 201
Skelton, 105
Smith, Thomas, 65
'Sofonisba'—Trissino, 147
Sonnet introduced in England, 106
Sonnet introduced in Spain, 129
Sonneteers, Elizabethan, 120
Spagnoletto, Lo, 242
Spenser, 77, 104, 107, 116-120
Speron Sperone, 147
Sta. Maria del Fiore, 181, 197, 200, 218
St. Bartholomew's Day, 211
St. Dominic, 277, 278
St. Francis of Assisi, 217, 277, 278
St. Gelais, 89
St. George of Donatello, 199

St. John, Order of, 12
St. Mark's at Venice, 234
St. Peter's, 185
'Steele Glasse'—Gascoigne, 109
Stephan, Meister, 259
Still, John, 151
Stilo culto, 136, 137
Stowe, John, 122
Stubbes, 122
Sully, 98
'Supposes'—Gascoigne, 150
Surrey, Henry, Earl of, 102, 105-107

'Tamburlaine' — Marlowe, 155
Tasso, 85, 295
Templars, Order of, 12
'Testaments'—Villon, 87
Tetzel, 276
'Theatre,' the, 152
Thorpe, John, 191, 192
Three Graces of Pilon, 211
Timoneda, Juan de, 138
Tintoretto, 236, 237
Titian, 238, 239
Torrigiano, 213
'Tottel's Miscellany,' 107
Tourneur, 166
Tours, 188, 209
Tragedy, Classical, 146-148
'Tragiques'—D'Aubigné, 97
Transitional architecture, 188, 189, 191
'Trattato della Famiglia'—Alberti, 73
Trent, Council of, 295
Trissino, 147
Troubadours, 18, 19, 69
Trouvères, 18, 19, 69
Tyard, Pontus de, 94

Udall, 151
'University Wits,' the, 154-158
'Utopia'—More, 63, 64, 263

Valla, Lorenzo, 49, 271
Vega, Lope de, 134-136, 171-175
Velasquez, 242, 243, 257, 258
Venice, 52, 233, 234, 260
  Architecture in, 180
  Art in, 233-238
'Venus and Adonis'—Shakespeare, 120
Verocchio, Andrea, 200
Veronese, Paolo, 237
Vicente, Gil, 168
Vignola, 186, 189
Villani, 82
Villon, 86, 87
Vinci, Lionardo da, 25, 37, 51, 226-228, 247
Viole, Sonnets to—Du Bellay, 96
Virgil, 39, 52, 67
Vischer, Peter, 212
'Vita Nuova'—Dante, 69
Vitelli, 59

Wakefield, 65
Waldenses, the, 278
Warham, Archbishop, 59, 264
Watson, 120
Webster, 166, 167

Weyden, Rogier van der, 253, 259
Wiclif, 23, 58, 278
Wilhelm, Meister, 259
Wolgemut, 212, 260
Wren, Christopher, 187, 194
Wyatt, Sir Thomas, 102, 105-107
Wykeham, 274

Zurbaran, 241
Zwingli, 287, 289, 291

AUGSBURG COLLEGE AND SEMINARY
LIBRARY - MINNEAPOLIS 4, MINN.